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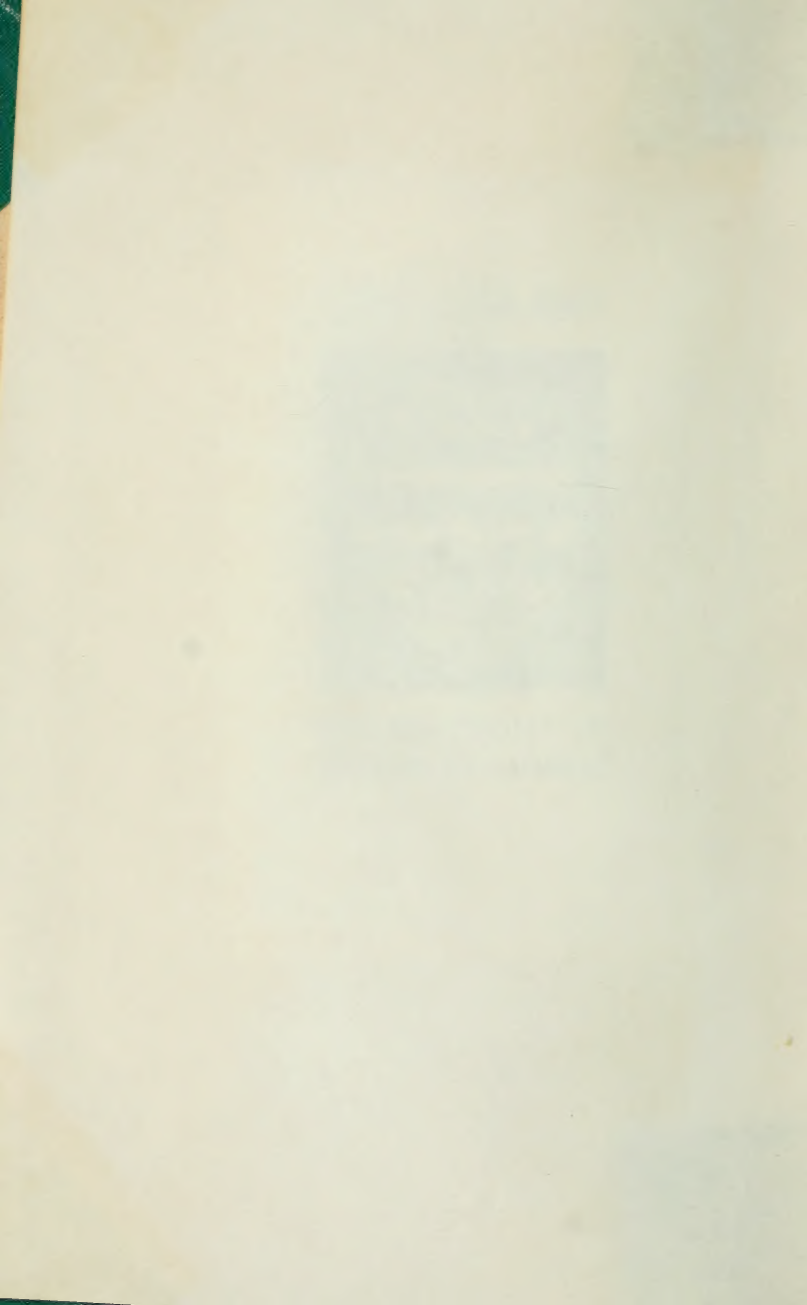
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FOREIGN SOLUTIONS
OF
POOR LAW PROBLEMS

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OF
POOR LAW PROBLEMS

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"THE DANISH POOR RELIEF SYSTEM"

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PREFATORY NOTE

MY best thanks are due to the Editors of the *Nineteenth Century and After*, the *Contemporary Review*, and the *Fortnightly*, for their kindness in allowing me to reprint here articles already published in their periodicals.

E. S.

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INTRODUCTION

HAD I fifty years ago ventured to suggest that we, as a nation, should try to learn from other nations how to better our poor-relief system, there would have been scoffing not only here, but abroad. For in those days we plumed ourselves, and not perhaps without reason, on being the model State in all that concerns the treatment of the poor. And other nations were then as firmly convinced as we were, that we knew more than they did about paupers and pauperish ways, and that our methods of dealing with them were infinitely wiser than theirs. In the eyes of foreign Poor Law officials, indeed, London was for generations the veriest Mecca: they turned their steps here instinctively when in search of guidance, and studied our Poor Law as reverentially as good Mahomedans study the Koran.

Now, however, things are otherwise; no State now when bent on reforming its poor-relief system sends its envoys here to learn how the work is to be done: it is to Vienna, Copenhagen, Berlin, or Budapest, that it sends them now. For although in the estimation of foreign experts our relief system, as a system, still ranks among the good, it no longer ranks as the best; and even if it did, no other

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nation would ever dream of adopting it: for that it is become of late years much too costly.

No country but England could afford to spend £14,000,000 a year on poor relief, it must be remembered; no city but London could, even if it would, spend 14s. a week each on its workhouse inmates; and nearly £40 a year on every poor little waif or stray it has to maintain—in Bermondsey, State children cost £52 a year each; and in Poplar, £50. In foreign Poor Law departments, our expenditure on poor relief is regarded as quite appalling: the officials there speak of it with bated breath, and wonder what we can possibly do with our £14,000,000; how we can manage to spend them, in fact, and yet have so little to show for our money. For although we spend on poor relief incomparably more per head of the population than any other country, there are countries undoubtedly where the poor, or at any rate the more deserving section of the poor, fare better than here; and where all sections alike are dealt with more intelligently, as well as more justly. This is a fact to which, let one try as one may, one cannot shut one's eyes. During the last twelve years I have watched the working of no fewer than ten foreign poor-relief systems; and among the whole ten, so far as I can judge, there are only three under which the deserving poor, especially the aged deserving poor, suffer so keenly as under ours; and not one at all under which the undeserving, the thoroughly worthless, are made quite so comfortable. And this, strangely enough, in spite of the fact that we are undoubtedly more anxious than almost any other people

to secure kindly treatment in their old age for those who have toiled and moiled in the days of their strength; just as in theory we are more determined to mete out justice untempered with mercy to ne'er-do-weels willing neither to work nor yet to want.

At the present time, both in Austria and in Denmark, the aged poor are treated much more considerately and humanely than in England. Not only there, but in Holland, Belgium, France, Roumania, nay even in Russia and Bosnia, old folk of the worn-out worker class have homes of their own, quite apart from any building into which paupers are admitted. In Vienna, Berlin and Copenhagen, work-shirkers and work-seekers alike are dealt with both more wisely and more fairly than in London: I know no people, indeed, unless it be the Servians or the Belgians, who deal with their unemployed so unwisely and unfairly as we do, or so wastefully. What for us is more serious still, in Germany and Hungary destitute children are infinitely better cared for than in England: a better chance is given them not only of living and thriving, but of making their way in the world and becoming useful, prosperous citizens. Then throughout Germany the invalid poor, the poor who are afflicted or diseased, fare better than here, if for nothing but that the care they require is given to them more speedily. In Berlin no working man stricken with consumption is left lingering on untended, until he has lost nine-tenths of his chance of recovery, and spread infection far and wide. Nor is an epileptic child allowed just to drift neglected until too old to be released from its infirmity, or even

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to be put in the way of earning its own living. The Authorities see to it there that the battle against disease is begun while there is yet time to wage it successfully. The state of things is different here, as we all know. The truth is, in matters relating to poor relief, we have of late fallen behind in the race, not because we have gone back—at the worst we have only stood still while waxing much more extravagant—but because our neighbours have quickened their pace.

There has been a great remodelling of poor-relief systems on the Continent, during the last few years: there is hardly a nation that has not tried experiments with a view to rendering its methods of battling against pauperism more humane, as well as more effectual and economical. The result is, there is hardly a nation now with a relief system at all from which we might not learn something, if we chose, in the way either of Poor Law framing, or Poor Law administering. That in all that concerns administration we might, if we tried, learn a great deal both from Germany and Austria, to say nothing of Denmark, there can be no doubt. We have proof that it is so, indeed, in the fact that a State child in London costs some three times as much as a State child in Berlin, although it is neither so well cared for, nor so well taught; in the fact, too, that an old woman "just waiting" miserably, in the most comfortless of our London work-houses, costs sixpence-halfpenny a day more than one who lives almost luxuriously in the most expensive of the Vienna old-age homes. For the cost

of living is now not so very much lower in Berlin than in London; while in Vienna it is, if anything, higher. If, therefore, in the one city the young who are destitute, and in the other, the old, entail on their fellows less expense than here, while receiving more generous treatment, it can be only because poor relief is more skilfully administered there than here, because, in fact, a better return is obtained for the money spent on the poor.

I often wonder whether there is any other country where the money spent on the poor yields quite so meagre a return all round, as in England. I never realised the extravagance of our relief administration, until I compared it with other relief administrations; nor had I any idea of the waste that goes on in our Poor Law institutions, until I saw the economy with which such institutions are, as a rule, worked elsewhere. The average cost per head in Poor Law institutions is just about twice as much in London as in Berlin, Vienna and Copenhagen, all taken together. In other words, so far as indoor relief is concerned, and it is indoor relief that runs away with most of the money, sixpence there is made to go as far as a shilling here. Nay, it is made to go further; for there all the inmates are better fed than here, and the more worthy among them are made much more comfortable.

Why it should be thus, why London should spend twice as much per head on its indoor poor as these cities spend, is a moot point, of course. Still it is, to say the least of it, significant that, whereas there the spending is done by trained experts as a busi-

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ness, here it is done by amateurs, for most of whom the work is at best but a hobby. In Berlin and Vienna the more important branches of poor-relief administration, and in Copenhagen all branches alike, are entirely in the hands of paid officials. What renders the Berlin administration specially interesting—suggestive too perhaps—is the fact that indoor relief there is organised and worked on strict business lines, precisely as if it were a great railway, with a Board of Directors who had to satisfy clamorous shareholders, at the end of the year, that for every penny spent good value had been obtained.

The articles contained in this volume were written for the express purpose of showing that some of the very problems with which we here are still grappling have already been solved elsewhere in a fairly satisfactory fashion—the problem of the State child, for instance, of the worn-out worker, and the loafing vagrant, as well as that of obtaining money's worth for money. They are founded on what I have myself seen and heard; for of late years I have spent a good deal of my time studying foreign methods of dealing with the poor, in the hope of thus obtaining hints as to how our own methods might be improved. "Hints" I say advisedly, for no one is more keenly alive than I am to the danger of importing ready-made methods of dealing with anything, and especially with pauperism. Our Poor Law administrators have difficulties to contend against from which foreign administrators are free; the very best of foreign poor-relief systems might, therefore, fail to work

satisfactorily were it transplanted here as a whole. If we are ever to have a really good, workable system, one not only humane and economical, but just, just both to the poor and to the ratepayers who support them, we shall certainly have to frame it for ourselves. Still, this is no reason, surely, why in framing it we should not profit by the experience of our neighbours; no reason why we should not learn from them, and even adopt certain features of the systems they have framed. The best of their poor-relief methods we could not adopt, it is true, unless the poor were classified; and unfortunately there is a sort of tradition among us that the poor here cannot be classified, as we have no "labour-books," no passports, no documents of any kind to render identification easy. But in Denmark also there are no labour-books, nor anything of the sort, yet in no country are the poor so carefully classified. Still it would be no easy task, it must be admitted, in so huge a town as London, to discriminate among the destitute, to sift and sort them, and classify them according to their merits. But sifted and sorted and classified they must be, if fair treatment is to be secured for them; and although the task would not be easy, it would not be impossible. Of that we hold proof; for even in London criminals are classified, and it would certainly be easier to classify paupers than criminals, as on them might be laid, without unfairness, the burden of showing what their past lives had been. As a point of fact, it is simply a question of taking enough trouble.

A London workhouse inmate once appealed to me

for help. As I had neither seen nor heard of the man before, I passed his letter on to the Charity Organisation Society; and begged them to obtain for me some information with regard to his past life and character. Within a week they gave me an exact account of what he had been doing and leaving undone for years—they told me even how many times he had been picked up drunk in the streets. Evidently what was done by the Charity Organisation Society in this case might be done by Poor Law officials, with the help if necessary of the Police, in the case of every applicant for permanent relief. And unless it be done, all attempts at Poor Law reform are foredoomed, so far at least as the deserving poor, and especially the aged deserving poor, are concerned. For as the greatest of living experts in all that regards pauperism is never weary of declaring: "It is sheer waste of time and money trying to make decent old folk comfortable, if you shut them up with folk who are not decent."

I ought perhaps to explain why there is no account of the Elberfeld system in my little book. It is, for one thing, because the system is already well known in England; and, for another, because, although it may be worked admirably in small towns, I doubt whether it could be worked at all in very large towns, owing to the impossibility of obtaining the thousands of honorary officials required to work it. And what we need here is a system suitable for large towns.

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THE STATE CHILDREN OF HUNGARY

WHEN in Vienna some little time ago, I paid a visit one day to the Foundling Hospital, where, in a room quite apart from the rest of the children, I found a handsome little fellow of about two years old installed in state. There was nothing of the forsaken about him, no sign of poverty; on the contrary, he looked the very picture of health and wealth. He was prettily dressed, well supplied with toys, too: evidently he had been tenderly cared for and kept out of harm's way his whole life long; for he smiled up into our faces cheerily, trustfully, as no child who knows the meaning of neglect, or ill-treatment, ever can smile.

"Oh! he is no foundling, he is a little Magyar," the doctor who was showing me over the institution exclaimed, in reply to an inquiry. "His father brought him here yesterday. He cannot take proper care of him, he says, as he is out of work and his wife is dead; so he has handed him over to the State.

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This is the right thing to do now, it seems. We have communicated with the Hungarian Government, and they are sending a special messenger to fetch the boy. This is part of their new Children's Protection system. Now that is an interesting experiment from every point of view, one well worth watching carefully."

I was, as it chanced, on my way to Budapest at the time, for the express purpose of seeing how this Children's Protection system was working; but when I heard what the doctor said, I was sorely tempted to change my plans and pass the city by unvisited. For a system under which a father could rid himself of his son as easily as of his worn-out shoe, did not appeal to me; it struck me, indeed, as being one that would entail not only much wasteful expenditure, but demoralisation all round. There must be some mistake somewhere, I thought, however; for it was not probable that the Hungarian Parliament would have passed the laws on which the system is founded, were it really so detrimental, as it seemed, to all sense of paternal responsibility. Still, as my mind was not at rest on the point, my first care, on arriving in Budapest, was to appeal to the most distinguished of the Children's Department officials for an explanation of the whys and wherefores of this handing over of children to the State. I told him of the boy I had seen at the Foundling Hospital; and inquired whether his department was actually prepared to take charge of all the children whose parents chose to deposit them there, or elsewhere.

"Certainly," he replied, without a moment's hesita-

tion, "we must take charge of them : on that point the law is explicit."

I ventured to suggest that this readiness on the part of the State to relieve parents of their duties might lead to gross abuses ; that, in fact, parents well able to provide for their children might place them in the keeping of the State simply to save themselves trouble and expense.

"Against that we take precautions, of course," he answered. "Parents able to maintain their children are forced to maintain them, or to pay for their maintenance. Still, even if cases of the kind you suggest do occur from time to time, they are arguments for, not against, our system, surely. Supposing the father of that child you saw in Vienna had the means of providing for him, and left him at the Foundling Hospital merely because he did not wish to do so ; would it not prove that he was heartless and worthless, and therefore quite unfit to bring him up properly ? We here in Hungary consider our children as the most precious of our national assets, the one which, above all others, it behoves us to keep from harm. Every Hungarian child that is born is a potential addition to our national wealth and strength : to allow, therefore, a single child who would live if properly cared for, to die because it is not, is to throw away what might be later a valuable possession. The first duty of the State, is, we hold, the preservation of the race ; and to ensure its preservation the chance must be secured to each of its members not only of living, but of developing, so far as in him—or her—lies, into a useful citizen. A State

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which, by leaving its children in the hands of parents who neglect them, ill-treat them, or half starve them, fails to secure to them this chance, is guilty not only of cruelty but of treachery. It is conniving at the weakening of the nation, conniving at its moral, physical and intellectual debasement; for the children of to-day will be the nation in years to come, and will hold the fate of the country in their hands. Whatever we Hungarians may leave undone, this, at any rate, we are determined to do : we will take good care of our children, let the cost be what it may. The Protection System was established for the express purpose of enabling us to take good care of them ; and an excellent system it is."

This official is an enthusiastic patriot as well as a devoted lover of children ; that he should talk in this strain is, therefore, perhaps not remarkable. What is remarkable, however, is that practically the whole Magyar nation talks as he does. Hard-headed business men, merchants, bankers and lawyers approve just as warmly as poets, philanthropists and doctors, I found, of this experiment which the State is trying for its children's benefit. What is more remarkable still is that they, these business men, maintain that the experiment is economically sound, and will ultimately pay well, even in the financial meaning of the term. According to them, in fact, the State, in spending its money on saving its babies' lives, is not only acting humanely, but is making a sound investment, one from which Hungary will derive a great increase both in wealth and strength. Besides, as they are never weary of

insisting, it is not so very much that it does spend ; for, whatever be the defects of the new system, it has one great merit : under it officialdom, the most expensive of all "doms," is reduced to a minimum.

* * * * *

In 1871 the Hungarian Parliament passed a law by which each town, or commune, in the kingdom was rendered responsible for its own poor. Municipalities and Communal Councils were charged with the duty of providing for the destitute ; and that they might have the means wherewith to provide, they were allowed to appropriate for their poor funds the fines levied in the local courts. Probably the local authorities did not find these means sufficient to enable them to do their work well ; possibly they resented being called upon to do it at all ; be this as it may, they certainly did it badly. The result was disastrous, especially for foundlings and all their youthful kindred, among whom the death-rate, which had always been high, became still higher. The Government tried to arouse the local authorities to a sense of the duty they owed to the State in the matter ; but the said authorities turned a deaf ear alike to admonitions and threats, holding that their first duty was to the ratepayers. In 1876 a law was passed to facilitate the boarding-out of children ; and in 1886 another law dealing indirectly with the same subject. It was all in vain, however ; the old state of things continued ; and babies that might have lived and thriven were allowed to die.

At length, as the number of deaths among children

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showed no signs of decreasing, the nation became alarmed ; and in 1895 the Government announced their intention of organising a special department of the Home Office to watch over foundlings and see that local authorities did their duty to them. By 1898, however, they seem to have arrived at the conclusion that if the State wished its children to be properly provided for, it would have to provide for them itself. For, when the law which secures for the hospital fund 5 per cent. of the yield of all direct taxes was before Parliament, the Home Minister proposed that the cost of the maintenance of all deserted children under seven, should be made a charge on that fund. He proposed, in fact, that the cost of the maintenance of these children should be removed from the local rates to the national taxes ; and that the children themselves should be taken out of the keeping of the local authorities, and placed under the care of the State. He went further, for he insisted that an extended meaning should be given to the words "deserted children," so as to include among them not only children whose parents actually have deserted them, but also children who have no parents, or whose parents neglect them, ill-treat them, or are unable, or unwilling, to support them, and who therefore have been pronounced deserted by the civil authorities. Orphans who cannot be placed in orphanages ; children temporarily under the care of the authorities owing to the illness of their parents, or to their parents being in hospital, in prison, or in a lunatic asylum ; and all children whose parents, or grandparents, cannot support them with-

out depriving themselves of the necessities of life, must rank with foundlings as deserted children, he declared.

The minister's proposals were greeted with enthusiasm and speedily became law. Already in 1898 the State assumed the guardianship of all its deserted boys and girls under seven years old, and undertook to provide for them. Then a difficulty arose: the Home Minister soon found himself with so many children that he did not know what to do. As something had to be done at once, he decided to farm them out with two philanthropic associations, the Children's Refuge Society and the White Cross, the societies pledging themselves to take good care of them, the Government defraying the expense.

Unfortunately, the White Cross, in its eagerness to fulfil its mission, waxed quite reckless in its expenditure; and M. Koloman Szell, who was at the time Minister President as well as Home Minister, was not the man to tolerate havoc-playing with the nation's money. He promptly made up his mind that for economy's sake the State must itself do what the societies were doing for it; and he began devising ways and means. In February, 1901, he propounded a scheme under which the State was not merely to see that its children were properly taken care of, but was itself actually to take care of them, to house, feed, clothe and tend them. Parliament passed with acclamation his State Refuges Bill, and provided him with the money to defray the initial expenses of the experiment he proposed trying.

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M. Szell then took a bold step. No sooner had the State Refuges Bill received the Royal assent, than he announced in Parliament that it was sheer folly to take care of children under seven, if when they were seven, they were to be turned adrift; and that to hand them over to the local authorities at that age was to turn them adrift. So long as this was done, although the mortality among those under seven would decrease, among those over seven it would increase; and if children must die, better let them die as babies than later, he maintained. Besides, even if they lived, as the local authorities could not be trusted to bring them up properly, the chances were they would take to evil ways; and the State would have to spend on building reformatories for them money which it might have spent more profitably on keeping them from needing reformation. From the national standpoint it was no good at all saving the babies, he argued, unless the babies could be made to grow up into useful citizens. He wound up by proposing that the State should take into its own keeping all deserted children under fifteen, unless they were in orphanages or other institutions; and that it should continue to defray the cost of maintaining such of them as were under seven, while requiring the local authorities to defray the cost of maintaining such as were over that age. His Bill for the protection of deserted children over seven was passed at once, and the Szell experiment was started.

Under the Children's Protection system, now that it is in full working order, the State is the

guardian-in-chief of all the children in Hungary, rich and poor alike. The kingdom is divided into eighteen districts, and in each district there is a State Children's Refuge, *i.e.*, a refuge to which every child in the district who has no home has a legal right to go. Then in every district there is also at least one Guardianship Tribunal, or Children's Law Court, organised for the express purpose of safeguarding the interests of every child there by seeing that it is either under the care of a guardian who does his duty to it, or in the keeping of the State. This court must at once hold an inquiry if it receives notice from municipal or communal authorities, members of philanthropic societies, or other responsible persons, that any one, no matter whether prince or beggar, is ill-treating or neglecting his children or wards; is not providing them with proper food, lodging and education; is setting them a bad example, or in any way exposing them to demoralising influences. Then, if the charges against him are proved, the court may either warn him that, unless he changes his ways and speedily, he will be deprived of his rights as a father—or guardian—or it may deprive him of them at once by declaring the children deserted. In this case it appoints for them another guardian, who, unless the court sanctions some other arrangement, must hand them over to the representative of the State, *i.e.*, the Refuge Director. The children may be lodged in the refuge temporarily, while the inquiry is being held.

If a parent is found in the act of ill-treating his offspring, it is taken from him at once and is sent, by

the authorities of the place where he lives, to the nearest refuge. If the police pick up babies in the street they transport them to a refuge; just as they transport there the little waifs and strays they come across, the luckless mites who are left uncared for because their parents are ill, in prison, or perchance on journeys. All neglected, ill-treated or deserted children, in fact, are packed off at once when found to a refuge; and an account of the circumstances in each individual case is sent to the Guardianship Tribunal, so that the wrongs done may be righted, and the wrong-doers be punished.

The children who are sent to the State refuges because of the cruelty or negligence of their parents, form but a small section, of course, of those who go there: the overwhelming majority are sent either because they have no parents, or because their parents have nothing wherewith to feed them. Any man—or woman—who cannot support his children because he is unable to work, or can find no work to do, has the right to hand them over to the authorities of his town or commune to be sent to a refuge. And the authorities cannot refuse to take charge of them unless there is clear proof (the duty of producing it rests with them) that he has misrepresented his circumstances, and has in reality the means of providing for them himself.

In the case of illegitimate children, the State goes even further in its zeal to do its best for them than in the case of the legitimate; for not only does it take charge of them, but it also, for their sakes, takes charge of their mothers for a

time. Local authorities are required, when the birth of an illegitimate child is registered, to make inquiries at once as to whether its mother has the means of providing for it; and if she has not, they must send her, together with her baby, to the nearest refuge. In the case of orphans, too, the State does not wait for them to be handed over to it; it seeks them out, that it may take them into its keeping before evil can befall them. Whenever the death of a widower—or widow—is registered, the law requires local authorities to find out whether he has left children behind him unprovided for; and, if he has, to send them without delay to a refuge, and inform the Tribunal that they have done so.

This willingness on the part of the State to take charge of all comers, provided only they be young, seems, of course, from the financial standpoint, reckless in the extreme. In reality, however, it is by no means so reckless as it seems; for although the State does actually provide for such of its children as have no relatives, or only relatives who could not be trusted to bring them up properly, excepting in cases of necessity, it does not provide for them at its own expense. On the contrary, it takes very good care that the money it spends on them shall, so far as possible, be refunded to it. Responsible relatives, *i.e.*, parents and grandparents, must either maintain those dependent on them, or defray the cost of their maintenance, if they can do so without depriving themselves of the necessities of life. On this point Hungarian law is clear. And if, being able to maintain them, they refuse to do so, or seek

to evade doing so, they commit a crime for which they may be severely punished. The only case in which a child is actually supported at the cost of the community is when both the child itself and its responsible relatives are destitute.

The very day a foundling is placed in a refuge, the authorities begin a regular hunt for its mother, and also for its father, no matter whether it is legitimate or not; and if they find them, a careful examination is made into their circumstances with a view to forcing them to defray the cost of its maintenance. The same steps are taken in the case of every deserted child. When a father hands over his own child to the State, or allows its mother to hand it over, account is taken not only of his means at the time, but of his ability to add to them. So long as his child is in a refuge, he himself is under the surveillance of his local authorities, who are bound to report to the Refuge Director any change in his circumstances—if being out of work he finds work, or if his wages are raised—so that he may be forced to contribute to its support according to his increased means. When the State relieves worthless parents of the care of their children against their will, it does not relieve them of the expense the care entails. On the contrary, its officials say to them practically: "We cannot trust you to bring up your children properly, we will therefore bring them up for you; but, as this is work you yourself ought to do, you shall pay the cost—we will do the spending, in fact, but you must provide the funds." So far as money is concerned, therefore, a man is under no temptation

to part with his child ; for, unless he is destitute, he loses rather than gains by so doing. For he must defray the full cost of its maintenance if he can ; and if he cannot, he must contribute towards the cost of its maintenance every penny he has after providing himself with bare necessities. And that cost is, of course, higher if the child is in the keeping of the State than if in his own keeping ; for the State provides for its children liberally, whereas needy parents can put them on short commons.

Besides, and this is an important point, children who are once in the keeping of the State remain there until it can be proved that to restore them to their families would be an advantage both to the community and themselves. A parent cannot deposit his son in a refuge one day and return for him a few days later ; for, by depositing him there, he has forfeited his rights as a father. And until he has recovered these rights—and the only way he can recover them is by convincing the Guardianship Tribunal that he has the means, ability and will to do his duty as a father—he has no claim on the boy whatever, and cannot interfere with him in any way, although he must support him if he can. Even from selfish motives, therefore, a parent thinks twice before giving up his children ; for, although they are a burden to him in their early days, they may be a valuable help when his own strength fails.

The administration of the Children's Protection Laws is vested in the refuge authorities, under the control of a Home Office department, each refuge being the headquarters of the administration for the

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district in which it stands. The Refuge Director, who is always a doctor, is personally responsible to the Home Minister for the well-being of the children in his own district ; while the manager is responsible for the financial and household affairs of the refuge. They, as the inspectress, assistant doctors and other officials, are under the surveillance of the Inspector-General, who, as the representative of the Home Office, practically directs and controls the whole working of the system. He goes about from refuge to refuge revising the accounts of the officials, and bringing his influence to bear not only on them, but on all whom he meets, especially local authorities, to stir them up to interest themselves in the State's new venture.

Although all the State's children go to a refuge, most of them—some 95 per cent.—go there only as sojourners ; the law, indeed, expressly ordains that no child who is even fairly strong in body and mind shall remain there. For a refuge is not a home, but a receiving house, a place to which children are sent to be sorted, sifted and kept under observation until the director decides what can best be done with them. Attached to every refuge there is, however, a sanatorium, where those requiring special care may remain for years if necessary ; and there are also isolation wards for those suffering from infectious diseases. Besides, the director is in close relations with all the children's institutions in the kingdom, State and private alike ; with the homes for incurables, for cripples, for the feeble-minded, or idiots ; and he can draft off into them many of his sorely tried little

charges; just as he can draft off into discipline schools such of them as are unruly; and into reformatories such as are demoralised. Then, as soon as the great hospital which is now being built in Budapest is finished, he will be able to send there the children who need the advice of the specialist, or the skill of the expert surgeon. For this hospital is to serve as central hospital for the eighteen refuges: all the little inmates who are deformed, paralysed, or in any way afflicted, will be sent there that they may, if possible, be delivered from their infirmities.

Happily, however, it is only a small percentage even among deserted children who are afflicted: the overwhelming majority of those who go to the refuges have their fair share of wits and physical strength. The all-important point, therefore, with regard to the new system, is how it provides for these, the State's normal children. This is the test by which it must stand or fall.

M. Szell holds strongly that to bring up children in institutions is bad both for the children and the community. It is bad for the children, because the life they lead there is unnatural, and they are therefore unhappy. As they have no one to care for them, or to make much of them, the best in them, instead of being fostered, is stifled, and they are turned into little machines. Then it is bad for the community, because what is needed is sturdy, self-reliant boys and girls, not machines; and also because institutions entail great expense. From the first, therefore, he was determined that whatever else were done with the State's *protégés*, they—such of

them at any rate as are fairly strong—should not be shut up in institutions. They must live, as other children of their class, in cottages, not in huge mansions, he said; and be brought up as other children, going share and share alike with them in life's buffetings as in its pleasures. They must be boarded-out, in fact, for in no other way could this going share and share alike be secured for them. M. Szell was alive to the fact, however, that boarding-out is fraught with dangers if done, as it sometimes is, in a happy-go-lucky fashion. To guard against all risk, therefore, he devised a boarding-out method of his own, one which is the most interesting and suggestive feature of his whole system.

Every director has in his own district a number of villages to which he stands in a somewhat peculiar relationship. In all that concerns sanitation they are under his close surveillance; he keeps watch, too, over their schools; and he brings pressure to bear sometimes on their local authorities. And even these authorities must pay heed to his warnings and act on his advice, as otherwise he would strike their village from off his list, and it would cease to be one of his children's colonies. Then, if this were to happen, the whole community would rise up against them; for it is a great honour for a village to be a children's colony, an honour, too, that brings money; for it is only in villages that are colonies that the State allows its children to be boarded-out.

For a village to be selected as a colony it must have a good climate, as good at any rate as can be

had in the district ; and it must have open spaces for playgrounds around it. There must be a primary school there, of course ; and if there is also a kindergarten, so much the better. Then it must be a well-to-do village : there must be nothing of the poverty-stricken about it, no grim wolves prowling around. On the contrary, it must be a place where those who work hard can live in comfort, and where most people do work hard. It is essential that there should be a good resident doctor, one willing to become the paid servant of the State, and, acting as the Refuge Director's deputy, watch over its children for it. It is essential, too—a *sine quâ non* indeed—that there should be there at least thirty women well fitted to act as foster-mothers.

No woman may become foster-mother to a State child unless she is strong, healthy, good tempered, and without "nerves." Both she and her husband, if she has one, must be sober, hard-working, and in all ways respectable. They must live in a home of their own—not one room—and must belong to the peasant or artisan class, not that of the unskilled labourer. They must prove that they are earning enough to live on ; apart from what they would receive with the child ; and, although the possession of a cow is not insisted on, it is a great recommendation. If it is a baby that is given to her, the woman must nurse it herself ; and whatever be its age, she must promise to treat it as if it were her own. If she does not do her best for it she is punished ; while if she does, and the child thrives, at the end of three years the director gives her a certificate, and the Home Minister

sends her a present. She is in close touch with the doctor, who is responsible both for her and her charge; and is under the surveillance of the director and his inspectress, who pay her surprise visits from time to time; while both she and the doctor are under the surveillance of a committee, consisting of the chief official personages in the neighbourhood and an equal number of ladies and gentlemen chosen by the local authorities. The members of this committee must not interfere either with the doctor or the mothers, however; but must content themselves with reporting to the director, when they notice things going wrong. There is a similar committee attached to the refuge itself, the members of which report to the Home Minister.

The number of State children sent to any one village is strictly limited, and varies according to the number of other children there; for great importance is attached to there never being more of them in one village than can be absorbed by the rest of the population. Otherwise they might form a class apart, it is feared, and that would be disastrous. As soon as one village is well supplied with children, the director organises a colony in another village; and this entails no expense at all, it must be noted, although it does entail a considerable amount of trouble.

The largest of the refuges is that at Budapest; but as this was labouring under difficulties when I was in Hungary, owing to its new buildings not being finished, I went down to Szeged to see how the system was working. The Szeged Refuge, which stands in the prettiest of the town's suburbs, con-

sists of a central building and two pavilions, one of which is the sanatorium. In the central building the basement serves as kitchens, store rooms and laundry; the ground floor as offices, consulting rooms, etc., for the director and his assistants; while on the first floor the children and their nurses are housed in bright, prettily-furnished rooms. Near the director's office are the reception wards. Every child brought there is taken in hand at once, first by the doctor and then by the nurse who washes, clothes and feeds it. There is no waiting about while questions are being asked, no time lost considering whether it shall, or shall not, be admitted. Within half an hour of its arrival, it is, as a rule, comfortably in bed. Meanwhile, whoever has brought it, unless provided with a destitution certificate, is called upon by the director to give full information with regard to its responsible relatives. If it is a baby, and the bringer is its own mother, she may be detained to act as nurse. The director may either keep her in the refuge, or board-out her and her baby in a colony; or even board-out her child and keep her in the refuge, for two months, to nurse another child.

One morning I found quite a little crowd of women in the Szeged Refuge waiting room. Some were there by the director's request to receive children; others, on the chance of his having children to give to them; while one woman had come to try to persuade him to put her on his foster-mothers' list. Her, however, he soon dismissed, as he had already two hundred mothers waiting for foster-children, he said. They who remained were all kindly, motherly-look-

ing women, and they were all dressed not only neatly, but warmly and well. They were the wives of better-class peasants, the director told me, and he seemed to know them all personally.

They watched the door with manifest anxiety; and there was quite a little flutter among them when voices were heard in the corridor, and the first of the children was brought in. It was a poor, weakly little creature, that looked as if it had the cares of the world on its shoulders. None the less there was not a woman in the room but was eager to have it; for, as one of them said, "A bit of trouble with a baby does not matter, for it is always like one's own." It was given, however, to a woman for whom the director had sent, as she had special skill in rearing the delicate; and she bore it off in triumph. Tears came into one woman's eyes when she heard there were no more babies that morning; and she would fain have gone off without a child at all, if the director had let her. But he allows no picking or choosing: each mother must take what he gives her, or be struck off his list. To her he gave a sturdy little fellow of two; and, although she would rather, as she confessed, have had a girl, within a very few minutes she had him on her knee, and was fondling him as tenderly as if she were his mother. Then two little things came toddling in together; for, as they were brother and sister, they must be boarded-out with the same mother. The competition for them was almost as eager as for the baby; and the woman to whom they were allotted beamed with delight as she led them off. There was one boy, however, for

whom there was no competition at all ; evidently, from the glances the women exchanged, none of them wished to have him at any price. He was about ten ; one of the vagrant tribe ; and to judge by the way he was crying, he did not relish the prospect of being forced to go to school every day and learn the meaning of law and order. His spirits revived, however, when the mother to whom he was assigned showed him some rosy apples she had ; and by the time they trudged off together, he and she were already the best of friends.

Another day I paid a visit to Sandorfalva, the largest of Szeged's thirty-one children's colonies, that I might see how the State's *protégés* fare when boarded-out, and the sort of homes in which they live.

In England Sandorfalva would rank as a country town, for it has some 4,000 inhabitants ; in Hungary, however, it is counted a village, as the chief calling followed there is corn growing. It has only two streets, and they straggle about in the most unconventional fashion around a great village green on which fruit trees grow. The cottages—houses are few and far between—are of stone and well built, with gardens around them. Many of them are quite charming inside and out, while they all seem neat and clean. Woe betide the Sandorfalvian, indeed, who was a slattern—who forgot to polish her windows and wash her blinds. Her neighbours would soon make life a burden to her, just as they would make life a burden to any woman who let her children run about dirty, thus exposing the State's wards to the risk of contamination.

Most of the foster-mothers were married to peasants, I found ; still, the husband of one was a blacksmith ; of another, a carpenter ; of another, again, a master chimney-sweep. They nearly all owned the cottages in which they lived, and several of them had deposits in the bank, I was informed. Money seemed so plentiful with some of them, indeed, that I was puzzled as to why they should care to be troubled with other people's children ; and I told them so. One woman replied with a laugh that that was just what her own people were always saying. " But the place seems so dull," she added, " if there are no little trots about." A husband had a very significant tale to tell. His wife had broken down completely when their only child had married and left them ; and had the director not sent two little boys to cheer her up, he did not know what would have become of her. The boys had evidently served their purpose ; for the woman seemed quite happy, and her face glowed with pride as she presented them to me ; and told me she was trying to persuade her husband to adopt them.

These villagers often do adopt their foster-children, it seems. According to the director, indeed, a woman who keeps a child two years is rarely willing to part with it ; and rather than do so, she will keep it at her own cost, if she possibly can. One of the mothers turned quite white when he told her he had come to fetch a little girl whom she had brought up from babyhood ; and when we tried to tempt some boys to leave their foster-parents and come away with us, they straightway made a scene. So far as an outsider could judge, all the mothers treat their

charges as if they were their own children ; while most of them regard them as their own, and are as keenly interested in them as if they were their own. On one point foster fathers and mothers alike seemed to have made up their mind : they all wished their charges to settle in the village, under their own eyes—there must be no transplanting of them later into towns. And the doctor agreed with them cordially.

There are 130 children boarded-out at Sandorfalva ; yet so completely are they assimilated to the other children, that no one would ever suspect there were any there at all. Even in the schools the teachers did not seem to know which were the State's children and which were not. It was impossible, indeed, that they should know ; for the former are dressed the same as the latter, they look the same, and practically they are the same in all respects. And as it is in Sandorfalva, so is it in all the children's colonies—so the Inspector-General assured me. Even the little Ishmaels who arrive there soon have their corners knocked off, and feel themselves so completely at home that they adopt the relations of those with whom they live, and talk of their uncles, aunts and cousins. They become members of the family, in fact, and members of the community to which the family belongs. Thus they must—they have no choice in the matter—go share and share alike with their fellows, luckily both for them and the community ; for therein lies their best chance of developing into useful citizens.

As the Protection System did not come into force until 1903, it is too early days of course to weigh

it in the balance. All that can be said of it with any certainty is that, so far, there is nothing in the results it has yielded to justify the apprehensions with which it was at first regarded. Even the ne'er-do-well class show none of that eagerness, it was feared they might show, to hand over their children to the State. At the present time the State's wards number only some 30,000; and Hungary, exclusive of Croatia and Slavonia, where the new system has not yet been introduced, has a population of more than 17,000,000. Then, instead of more illegitimate children being born under the new system, as it was almost taken for granted there would be, there are fewer by 7 per cent. compared with the legitimate, than under the old system, if we may judge by the refuge statistics. That many babies are now alive who would be dead had the new system not come into force, we have proof in the fact that, whereas in 1900, 22.2 per cent. of the children born living died before they were one year old, by 1904 the percentage had sunk to 19.67, and is now lower. What is more significant, and more conclusive, is that while the death-rate among infants under one year of all classes was, in 1904, 19.67 per cent., among those under the care of the State it was, in 1905, only 15.39. Among children of all ages under the care of the State, the mortality was in 1904 only 7.87, and in 1905, 9.30 per cent., although these children belong for the most part to the lowest class, and therefore the most unfit. This fact in itself is enough to give pause to those inclined to sing a Tekel over the Szell experiment.

Whatever one may think of the policy of the Magyar State in taking charge of its children at all, that, having taken charge of them, it deals with them wisely, economically, and most humanely, is beyond dispute. Not only have many babies' lives been saved since the new system came into force, but the lives of many boys and girls that were a heavy burden to them, have been rendered well worth living. Centralisation has its defects, still, where children are concerned, especially pain-stricken children; its defects are of little account compared with its merits, if only that it enables the best that can be done, to be done, for each one of them. Let local authorities take as much trouble as they will, and spend as much money, they can never deal satisfactorily with afflicted or abnormal children; for, as the number with which they have to deal is small, they must club together unsuitable cases, epileptics with idiots, the unruly with the demoralised, to the detriment of their charges and the great expense of the community. With the refuge directors, however, it is different; as they have hundreds of these children to provide for, they can classify them and secure for them individually the precise treatment they each require. The result is, many a poor little sufferer is restored to health and strength; and many a boy who would otherwise have gone through life a worry and expense to his fellows, is put in the way of earning an honest livelihood.

As for the fashion in which the State's normal children are now dealt with in Hungary, it is certainly admirable. Of all the methods of providing for

waifs, strays, and their little kith and kin, this boarding-out on the Szell system is by far the best, so far as I can judge, and I have watched the working of it carefully. Children are as safe from neglect and ill-treatment in colonies as in the most costly and best regulated of institutions; and yet they lead there lives of the sort children ought to lead, free, natural lives, full of work, play and bustle, each with his own little nest by a fireside, and with some one at hand to mother him. Thus they "take root" in the villages where they spend their early days; and the chances are will live and die there, instead of drifting into towns.

Then the Szell system of providing for children is as cheap as it is good; for under it not only is the cost of administration reduced to a minimum, but also the cost of building. One refuge is all that is required for each district, even though the district be as large as London; and in Hungary the average cost of building a refuge is £8,333. In 1905 the full expenditure on the State's children, although the number of them ranged from 20,960 to 25,900, was only £143,089. Of this sum £127,140 was spent on the children themselves, while the directors, officials and servants received in salaries, rations, etc., £15,949. The full cost per child was only £6 9s. for the year. The State, it must be remembered, maintains at its own cost only the children who are under seven, those between seven and fifteen being maintained at the cost of the towns or communes to which they belong.

Now those little Magyars who are costing their

fellows only £6 9s. a year each, are just as well fed, clothed, housed and taught as English Poor Law children who are costing £20, £30, £40, and some of them even £54 a year each ; and they are just as carefully kept out of harm's way, just as skilfully tended when ill. If they are not treated more kindly than our children, they are at any rate treated in a more natural, motherly fashion, a fashion that makes them happier, and fits them better to live on equal terms with their fellows, and fight their own battles. Thus were this refuge and colony system established here, the State's children would certainly fare better than now ; while, as for the ratepayers, the heavy burden they bear would be lightened considerably. How much the 231,918 children, who are supported by the community in England and Wales, really cost has never yet been discovered ; all that is known with any certainty on the subject is that they, together with their "belongings," cost some £14,000,000 a year. Supposing the 60,421 children who are living in work-houses, schools, homes and other institutions, could be dealt with on the Szell system, a considerable saving would certainly be effected. For, although the cost per head under this system would be higher in England than in Hungary, it would not amount, in London at any rate, to nearly one-half of what it is under the present system. Then, too, a solution would be found for the little in-and-outer problem. These children, the most luckless of all children, as things are, could be kept in the refuges.

It may be argued that the Szell system is out of the question in England, owing to the difficulty there

would be in finding suitable foster-mothers for the State's charges. So long as a foster-mother is paid only 4s. 6d. a week, or at most 5s., for taking care of a child, and is required for that not only to board and lodge the child, but to provide it with clothes and shoes, this difficulty will exist of course; but let the terms be raised even by 1s. 6d. a week, and it would speedily vanish. Were refuges established in such places as Lewes, Keswick, Aylesbury, Chichester and Whitby, each one of them would have within easy reach a dozen villages where children's colonies could be organised. If the Local Government Board would relax their boarding-out rules, and Guardians could be induced to combine so that one refuge might serve for a whole county, or even in some cases for two or three counties, the experiment might be given a trial in a very short space of time.

POOR RELIEF IN VIENNA

THE Poor Relief system in force in Vienna to-day is founded on a law which the Emperor Joseph II. drew up with his own hand, and the whole Poor Law administration there is still characterised by the philanthropic spirit with which he inspired it. He himself was undoubtedly influenced in his work by his mother, the Empress Maria Theresa, who, ruthless though she might be in her dealings with the rich, was always merciful towards the poor. Even in the midst of her struggle for her crown, she found time to busy herself with their concerns; for she held, as the ordinances she issued prove clearly, strong views as to the way they ought to be treated, views well in advance not only of her own day, but, in some respects, of ours. For instance, when she became Empress it was the custom in Vienna to lodge all the poor whom the town supported together in the Spitals, no matter whether they were old or young, feeble or strong, keen-witted, half-witted, or with no wits at all. This arrangement she, however, pronounced scandalous, and she declared it must be altered. Children must not be allowed to live in the same house as worthless persons lest, perverted by their evil example, they should fall into lazy, disreputable ways, she informed

the authorities ; and she called upon them to remove into orphanages all the boys and girls who were in the Spitals. She called upon them also to remove all the idiots and other insane persons who were there, lest they should cause discomfort to the sick. What is more notable still, she insisted that the more worthy among the inmates of the Spitals should be lodged quite apart from the less worthy ; and that specially good care should be taken of such of them as were old. And that was more than 150 years ago !

The Emperor Joseph was evidently in full sympathy with these advanced views, for there is an eminently latter-day ring about every saying of his on the subject of pauperism, that has been handed down to us ; and the Poor Relief system he framed is one which the most thorough-going of our twentieth-century Poor Law reformers might father to-morrow, without any risk whatever of being dubbed reactionary. Strangely enough, indeed, the lines on which it is framed are precisely those semi-philanthropic, semi-socialist lines which, after being scoffed at and derided for centuries, are now just beginning, as it seems, to find favour in the eyes of our law-makers.

The Emperor's relief system recognised the fact that there are paupers and paupers—*i.e.*, persons who are destitute because of their misfortune, not their fault, as worn-out workers and children ; and persons who are destitute because of their vices, laziness or folly. His Majesty seems to have realised clearly that a certain section of his subjects could not

provide for themselves in their old age, no matter how hard they might try. He seems also to have realised that a certain other section would never provide for themselves, not even when in the prime of their vigour, unless they were forced. And holding that it would be unwise as well as unjust to place these two sections on the same level, and deal with them in the same fashion, he made it his aim, in formulating his system, to distinguish between them with a view to securing for each the treatment merited. Feeble old folk and children must be well cared for and kept out of harm's way, while the able and strong must be forced to work: this is the burden of the many decrees he issued on the subject of Poor Relief. Practically he divided the destitute into two classes, non-paupers and paupers, as he insisted that the relief given to the aged, as that given to children, should not be regarded as pauper relief, nor yet as charity. A man who works hard so long as he has the strength to work, has the right, when his strength fails him, to be supported by his fellows, so at least Joseph II. maintained. He placed the worn-out worker, in fact, on precisely the same footing as the worn-out soldier; and declared that his commune in providing for him was only paying him for his past services. He even determined the scale on which he should be paid; for he decreed that any one who had completed his sixtieth year and was unable to work, should have a legal claim on the authorities of his commune for a pension equal in amount to one-third of his average earnings when able to work. They might, it is true, instead

of giving him a pension, lodge him in an old-age home, but not against his will. While thus securing what he considered just treatment for the non-pauper class, the Emperor was careful also to secure just treatment for the pauper; he drew up very definite instructions as to the way in which vagrants, sturdy beggars and other persons who, having the strength to work, were not willing to work, should be dealt with. They were one and all to be sent off straight to a penal workhouse, when they were caught, and kept there as prisoners until they had learnt to work with a will.

The Austrian Poor Relief system, as its Poor Law, has undergone many changes of course since the time of Joseph II.; still, even to-day, the distinction the Emperor made between non-paupers and paupers is maintained. No one would ever dream in Vienna of regarding the old people or the children for whom the community provides, as belonging to the pauper class; or of considering that any disgrace was attached to them because they were in the receipt of relief. They are the town's pensioners, its ex-workers and future workers, while its paupers are the able-bodied destitute; and whereas, in theory at any rate, it supports its pensioners gladly, what it must give to its paupers it is inclined to grudge.

In Austria, as in England, the right to relief is recognised. Any Austrian subject who is not able to support himself, or herself, and has no responsible relative, *i.e.*, parent, grandparent, wife—or husband—or direct descendant able to support him, or her, must be supported by the community. The town or

commune in which he has a settlement must provide him with the necessities of life, and with proper care in case of illness. This it cannot legally refuse to do ; but this is all it need do, unless indeed he be a child, in which case it must provide him also with education.

In Vienna the responsibility for the relief of the poor, as for all the business of the town, rests on the *Gemeinderath*, or Municipal Council, the members of which are elected by the ratepayers. The Bürger-master, as their representative, is responsible on the one hand to the ratepayers, and on the other to the Statthalter and the Minister of the Interior, for the whole Poor Relief administration ; and if anything goes wrong—if a pensioner is found to be receiving too little, or a pauper too much—it is he who is called to account. Practically, however, the Municipal Council, as a council, has nothing whatever to do with the administration of Poor Relief, as its members delegate both their duties as an executive body, and their authority as a controlling body, to their executive committee, the Stadtrath, of which the Bürgermaster is the chairman. This committee consists of certain members of the Municipal Council who are appointed by their fellow members to direct and control the business of the town. Each member has under his surveillance a section of the Magistrat—*i.e.*, the paid officials, experts for the most part who, together with certain honorary officials, actually carry on the business of the town. The Magistrat, a regularly organised department, is divided into as many sections as this business has branches ; and each section carries on one special branch. One of

these sections, the 11th, is charged with the administration of the relief of the poor, so far as it is not administered by honorary officials; while another, the 12th, is charged, within the same limits, with the administration of the relief of the orphans. For Vienna, realising the importance of keeping children free from pauperising associations, does not allow the orphans it supports to be under the same section as the adult poor.

The honorary officials who share with the Magistrat officials the work of relieving the poor, are the members of the Armeninstitute, or Boards of Guardians. Vienna is divided into twenty-one districts, and each district has at least one Board, the members of which are elected not by the ratepayers, but by the members of the District Councils, who are themselves elected by the ratepayers to manage for them their purely local affairs. No Guardian may act, however, until his election has been confirmed by the Stadtrath; and the Stadtrath has the right at any time to deprive him of his office; has the right also to dissolve any Board if such a course seems advisable. There are 2,069 Guardians altogether, and they are of two kinds, Guardians of the Poor, who must be men, and Guardians of the Orphans, who may be either men or women. It is the Stadtrath that decides how many Guardians shall be elected for each district; and each district is divided into as many wards as it has Guardians of the Poor, each Guardian being responsible for the relief of the poor in one ward. If a district is a large one, its wards are arranged in groups of not more than eighteen wards

each. The Guardians belonging to the same group form practically a subordinate Board, as they act together in what concerns their own division of the district, while acting with the Board itself in what concerns the district as a whole.

In addition to the Boards of Guardians and the Group Boards there is another, higher Board, the Zentralrath, which is a very notable feature of the Vienna relief system. Of this the chairmen of all the Boards of Guardians are ex-officio members, as well as certain representatives of the Poor Law paid officials, the chairmen of the Anti-Pauperisation Society and other private philanthropic associations. The chief function of this Zentralrath, which meets at the invitation of the Bürgermeister and under his presidency, is to bring about improvements in the Poor Relief system. It aims also at securing uniformity in the administration of the Poor Law, and co-operation between the administrators of Poor Relief and those of private charity.

Another notable feature of this system is the Zentral Kataster. This Kataster is practically the diary of all the poor whom Vienna helps. The name of every man, woman or child who, since 1900, has received one penny in Poor Relief, stands recorded there, each on its own special page, together with the amount he—or she—has received, and the important facts of his life. Whoever applies for relief must fill in a form containing certain questions concerning himself and his belongings; and he is under no temptation to fill it in untruthfully, as every statement he makes can at once be tested by refer-

ence to his papers and the police records of his district. If relief is granted this form, with supplementary notes, is sent to the Magistrat, by whom it is entered in the Kataster. Whenever a fresh grant is made the fact is noted. Thus the Kataster is a complete record, which can be referred to at any time, of all who are in the receipt of relief, and of all that they have received.

Roughly speaking, the administration of outdoor relief is in the hands of the Guardians, while that of indoor relief is in the hands of the Magistrat. The Guardians, however, cannot grant permanent relief without the consent of the Magistrat; and in all that they do they must act in co-operation with them and under their surveillance.

They have, of course, no power of levying rates. They are expected to raise a certain amount of the money they require by persuading the charitable to give it to them, and the rest is supplied to them by the financial section of the Magistrat. Every tenth day the chairman of a Board receives from this section a certain sum of money towards defraying the cost of the relief of the poor in his district; and at the same time he renders an exact account of what he has done with the money he received on the previous tenth day. This account, which must be signed by his colleagues, is revised by the Magistrat. The amount of money a Board receives varies according to the size of the district for which it acts and the comparative wealth or poverty of the inhabitants. It is fixed by the Stadtrath in consultation with the Magistrat and the Board.

Each member of a Board is responsible to its chairman for the relief of the poor in his ward. He is expected to be personally acquainted with them all and to pay frequent visits to such of them as are in the receipt of relief. If trouble comes upon them they have the right to apply to him, whether what they need be material help or merely advice. Their applications for Poor Relief must be addressed to him, and be by him brought before the Board ; or, if the case be pressing, before the chairman, who between its monthly meetings represents it. If relief is required only temporarily, it may be granted at once ; but if it is manifest that it will be required not for weeks, but perhaps for years, the consent of the Magistrat must be obtained before it can be granted. Applicants requiring indoor relief are passed on to the Magistrat, who have the management of all the Poor Law institutions ; and so are applicants who are citizens, as they are relieved out of a special fund ; while applicants who have no settlement in Vienna are relieved only temporarily until their own communes can be communicated with. Thus, although a Board has the whole of the poor of the district under its care, it is only to a section of them that it actually grants relief ; and even to them the amount of relief it may grant is strictly limited. The maximum permanent allowance it may make is, for an adult, 30 kronen¹ a month ; and for a child, 24 ; while the maximum grant it may make is 30 kronen. In Vienna there are no paid relieving officers, it must be noted ; the relief a Board grants is paid out by its chairman or his deputy.

¹ Krone = 10d.

The Guardians administer sick relief as well as poor relief; each Board has its own doctors to attend the poor, and its own chemists to supply them with medicine. A Guardian must see that all who live in his ward are properly cared for in case of illness; and if they cannot have in their own homes the attention they need, he must arrange, through the Magistrat, for their admission to some hospital. There are no Poor Law infirmaries in Vienna, but so long as there is a vacant bed in a public hospital, it is at the service of the poor; as all these hospitals are supported out of a special fund which derives its income chiefly from old foundations and legacies left for the benefit of the poor.

The Guardians of the Poor are responsible for the adult poor only, the Orphans' Guardians—the orphans' fathers and mothers as they are called—being responsible for the children. Attached to every Board there are several of these Guardians, whose special business it is to interest themselves personally in the town's children, to visit them constantly, see that they are well housed, well fed, and above all that they are being well brought up and sent to school regularly. If they are not satisfied with the conditions under which their *protégés* live, they may insist on their being changed; and if they disapprove of the persons who have charge of them, they may remove them from their care. Not only must they keep their Board informed concerning them, but every six months they must send a special report on each one of them to the Magistrat, by whom it is entered in the Kataster. Then, when the time comes for the

children to turn out into the world, their Guardians must try to discover the work for which they are each best fitted, and put them in the way of learning how to do it—must try to prevent their ever drifting into the great unskilled labour market. It is only for the children living in the district that the Guardians for the district are responsible; they have nothing to do either with those boarded-out in the country or placed in institutions. These are under the care of the Orphans' Section of the Magistrat, who have their own inspectors.

Vienna always leaves a child with its own relatives, if these relatives can be relied upon to treat it kindly and bring it up properly. If a respectable man has more mouths to feed than food wherewith to feed them, the Board for his district holding that, as a choice of evils, it is better to risk lowering wages than to allow children to go underfed—and having no fear of pauperising before their eyes—makes him an allowance of 4 kronen a month, for each child excepting one. If a widow is left with more children than she can provide for, she receives an allowance of from 6–10 kronen a month, for each child excepting one. Orphans who have relatives are, if possible, boarded-out with them; while those who have none are, if under six, first sent to the Foundling Hospital and then boarded-out; and if over six, either boarded-out or sent to one of the town's orphanages, or some similar institution. The rule is to board-out the younger among them and place the elder in the orphanages, the idea being that there their education can be more carefully attended to than when boarded-out.

These arrangements are for normal children; for the abnormal there are special arrangements. The abnormally perverse, for instance, if girls, are generally taken charge of by the nuns, who have training homes for them; while, if boys, they are sent to Eggeburg, one of the most interesting institutions in Austria.

Eggeburg is not a Poor Law institution, but a reformatory; and the Poor Law children who are sent there, are sent not because they are destitute, but because they are either criminal or demoralised. There are boys there who have committed murders, boys who have set houses on fire, and boys who have been convicted of stealing not once but again and again. They all belong to the same pitiable little company: they have all started life heavily handicapped morally or physically; have started life, too, in the wrong track; and Eggeburg is organised for the express purpose of giving them a chance of freeing themselves from the burden they bear, and of making a fresh start. The system in force there is to keep them in the open air, hard at work either with their heads or their hands, whenever they are not either eating or sleeping. The reformatory is a great farm; and, excepting for the three hours they spend over their books, these boys are out on the land the whole day long, toiling and moiling, and delighting in their toil and moil—they run about like rabbits, without hats or shoes or stockings. They are taught not only to dig and to plough, but to garden, to train fruit trees, raise flowers; to tend cattle, too, and look after fowls, infinite trouble being taken to arouse in them, these

little street arabs, a love of the country, and make them forget that there are such things as towns. For therein lies, they who have charge of them hold, their surest chance of remaining in the narrow path.

A little troop of them were hunting for eggs when I paid them a visit, and with an energy and zest that spoke volumes. Their eyes were bright and they held themselves erect ; what was more remarkable, they answered without hesitation when addressed, and laughed in the most light-hearted fashion. Evidently the fresh-air-and-good-food cure had worked miracles among them ; for they looked of the very stuff of which the honest and self-supporting are made. And in their case appearances are not deceptive, for it rarely happens that a boy who has been to Eggeburg ever returns to his old evil ways. The great majority of them remain in the country and develop into useful citizens.

In most towns there is a tendency, in this our day, to deal more generously with destitute children than with destitute men and women. In Berlin and New York, for instance, both money and thought are lavished on the young whom the community supports ; while as for the aged, what is given to them is given only of necessity. In Vienna it is otherwise : there the arrangements for the relief of the old people are better—both more carefully considered and more liberal—than those for the relief of children, a fact that says more, perhaps, for the hearts than for the heads of the authorities.

If a man—or a woman—above sixty is without the money wherewith to provide for himself, or

the strength to earn the money, he applies to the Guardian of his ward for help. Then, if he has a home to live in, and some one to take care of him, or is able to take care of himself, he is granted out-relief, a money allowance if he can be trusted to spend it wisely, otherwise relief in kind. Supposing, however, he is homeless, feeble and "alone-standing," he is sent to a *Versorgungshaus*, or old-age home, if there is a vacant place there; and, if not, to a small poorhouse until there is.

Versorgungshäuser are the distinctive feature of the Austrian Poor Relief system, so far as the aged are concerned. Already in the days of Joseph II. Vienna had two if not more of these homes, and at the present time it has six. One of them is reserved exclusively for citizens; another, that at Mauerbach, is reserved for persons who, owing to their perverted notions as to what is seemly, cannot be accorded the full liberty the old people in the other homes enjoy. In all the six together there is space for more than six thousand inmates. As the *Versorgungshäuser* are looked upon by classes and masses alike as the homes of the aged poor, the place where they have a right to be, no disgrace is attached to going there. It would no more occur to an Austrian ex-worker to be ashamed of living in a *Versorgungshaus* than it would to an English veteran to be ashamed of being at the Chelsea Hospital. There is not a touch among the inmates of that pariah feeling which is so painfully evident among the inmates of our work-houses. On the contrary, they all seem to be extremely glad to be where they are, and to be

rather proud than otherwise of being there. And as it is with them so it is with their relatives: there is no inclination on their part to look askance on these old people, or to shun them. On Sundays and holidays, indeed, the homes are thronged with visitors come to have a chat with old friends and relatives and tell them the family news. They bring them little presents more often than not, caps with bright ribbons for the old women, neckties, perhaps, for the old men; for great importance is attached to personal appearance in the homes; and although the inmates are provided with good clothes, and are given a voice in deciding their colour and form, they are not provided with finery.

In all the homes alike, excepting Mauerbach, life is made as easy and pleasant as possible for the inmates. They are treated with great kindness and great consideration: their wishes are consulted and deference is shown even to their prejudices. They may pay visits to their friends just when they choose, providing they are safe at home and ready for bed by nine o'clock. They may even go and stay with them for the week together, if they obtain the permission of the director. The officials who take care of them interfere with them as little as possible, never in fact so long as they demean themselves with propriety, and observe the few simple rules in force for the sake of the general comfort. And this they practically all do; for the great majority of them are respectable old people; and the few who are not, demean themselves as if they were, as they know that otherwise they will be sent to Mauerbach. The most "shady" of

all the old men who have ever been admitted, had the manners of a Hofrath, the director assured me, and conducted himself as a saint.

Some two years ago Vienna built for itself a new Versorgungshaus, the finest in the whole world. It is at Lainz, the prettiest of the town's suburbs, a little beyond the Emperor's Palace, Schönbrunn, and with his Thiergarten on one side of it. The situation is quite ideal for an old-age home; for, although in the country, with lovely gardens around it, it is within easy touch of all parts of the city, as electric cars run from near Lainz to within a stone's throw of St. Stefans, and the fare is only 3d. This is a matter of greater importance than it seems; for even in the best of circumstances life is but a dreary business for the aged, if they are too far away from their own belongings to be able to see them from time to time.

The Lainz Home is a huge place, far too huge, according to English notions; but Austrians, it must be remembered, have none of our horror of living in large buildings with strangers around. Besides, huge as it is—there is space in it for 3000 inmates—care has been taken to prevent its being overpowering; for it is built in pavilions, and each pavilion is practically a separate home. There are pavilions for old men, and pavilions for old women, for married couples, too; for the sick, for the Sisters who take care of the sick, for the officials and many others. Some of the rooms are quite small, others large; they are all prettily furnished, pale green and white being the dominant colours; and all are provided with easy chairs and comfortable beds. Before the windows there are

verandahs on which the old people love to sit and bask in the sunshine.

The commissariat arrangements at Lainz are curiously characteristic of the fashion in which Vienna deals with its old pensioners. Thoroughly good food is provided for all the inmates who care to have it, better food, as many of them assured me, than they had ever had in their lives before. For breakfast they have coffee, cocoa or soup, and bread and butter; for dinner, soup, meat, vegetables and pudding; for "Jause," coffee and cakes; and for supper, soup and some light dish. The materials used are of the best quality; everything is beautifully cooked and nicely served. Such of the inmates as wish to cater for themselves, however, are free to do so, providing they are not on the invalid list and can be trusted to cater prudently. In this case an allowance of 52 heller a day—about $5\frac{1}{4}$ d.—each is made to them, and they are free to spend it either at the Home Restaurant, where everything is sold at cost price, or elsewhere, if they choose. But if any one is found spending too much of his money on wine and too little on solid food, he forfeits his allowance, and must eat the meals provided.

Then not only are the inmates provided with food, they are provided also with pocket-money, four heller a day each. This is not a large sum; it is less than a halfpenny indeed; none the less the possession of it makes all the difference in the world to many a worthy old man and many a worthy old woman; for it is a keen delight to them to have something of their very own, something they can spend as they

choose, or give away. Our poor old paupers have nothing. These Lainz pensioners have also the chance of earning money for themselves ; for if they are strong enough to do a little housework, or sewing, or knitting, for the institution, they are paid wages, ranging in amount from 1d. a day to 8d. Little wonder they are happy and content, and happy and content they certainly are ; it is a real pleasure, indeed, to pay them a visit, so evident is it that things are going well with them and they know it. There is no trace of workhouse apathy about them, none of that just-waiting-for-death that so often marks the worn-out worker here. On the contrary, they seem to have lost none of their interest in life, and they manifest the most lively curiosity as to what is going on in other countries, even in far-away England.

When one thinks of the comforts with which the old people at Lainz are surrounded—the pretty rooms in which they live, their good clothes and dainty food—it seems almost incredible that the cost per head there should be less than in our London workhouses ; yet such is the case. The full cost per head at Lainz, for sick and hale alike, officials' salaries and inmates' pocket-money included, is only 1s. 5½d. a day ; and of this 5d. goes in rent—*i.e.*, in paying the interest on the money spent in building the home and the contribution to the redemption fund. The average cost per head in our comfortless London workhouses is 2s. a day. Yet the cost of living is quite as high in Vienna as in London, only there a much better return is obtained than here for

the money spent on the aged poor; and it is obtained simply because more thought is given to the spending of it. Pretty rooms need cost no more than ugly ones, and dainty dishes cost less than chunks of beef, if the catering is done skilfully. And in Vienna it is done very skilfully, by experts, too, not amateurs; for the management of the Versorgungshäuser, as of all other Poor Law institutions, is in the hands of the Magistrat, not of the Guardians.

Then in Vienna much less is spent on surveillance than here, the old people, to their infinite content, being left more to go their own way. Excepting the director, who acts as a sort of general father, what officials there are at Lainz are there simply as the inmates' servants, to wait on them and take care of them. For the whole community insists that the town's old pensioners shall be made not only comfortable, but, as far as possible, happy; and to make them happy would be impossible were they to be treated as prisoners and kept under subjection. The Viennese have certainly the right to be proud of the way they provide for these old people, the more proud because it is not by lavishing money on them, but by taking thought for them, and treating them as fellow creatures, with susceptibilities, feelings and fancies, the same as their own, that they secure for them the well-being they so keenly enjoy.

Although in Vienna all able-bodied applicants for relief are classed as paupers, they are by no means all treated alike; on the contrary, care is taken to discriminate among them with a view to adjusting treatment to merit in each individual case. Austria,

indeed, is the only country, excepting Denmark—before long we shall be able, perhaps, to add Norway—where a serious attempt is made to differentiate between the work-seeker and the professional loafer, and to deal justly with the one as with the other. These are the only countries where a helping hand is given to men who are temporarily out of work in such a way as to keep them from drifting into pauperism ; the only countries, too, where loafers are not only punished and forced to work, but are taught how to work, and are so far as possible imbued with the wish to work.

Any one who has a settled habitation in Vienna applies, if destitute, to the Guardian of his ward for out-relief ; and if he is respectable and can show that his destitution is not owing to his own fault, it is granted to him as a rule, especially if he has children. It is granted only temporarily, however, for just long enough to give him the chance of trying to become self-supporting again. If at the end of two or three weeks he is still without employment, his out-relief is stopped, and he must betake himself either to the Asyl, or the workhouse, unless, indeed, he chooses to leave Vienna and go on the tramp.

The Asyl—there is only one—is practically a casual ward organised on philanthropic principles. It is maintained at the cost of the town, and its *raison d'être* is to afford food and shelter to work-seekers while on the search. Men and women who present themselves between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. are admitted, if they have a settlement in the town ; and they are each provided with a bath, supper—bread

and soup—and a comfortable bed. Before 7 o'clock the following morning they must turn out; but they are given their breakfast before they go. They may come back in the evening, however, if they choose; they may use the place as a hotel, in fact, for seven nights, providing they spend the seven days looking for work. Whether they have found it or not they must leave the Asyl at the end of seven days, and may not return there for at least three months. Curiously enough, although there is room there only for 67 men and 7 women, the place is rarely full; for although respectable men resort there gladly when the necessity arises, the worthless and idle pass it by on the other side. For they know that if they go there they must not only look for work with a will, but must accept it, if it is offered to them under what the authorities regard as fair conditions. If they are found just loafing about, or refusing employment when offered—the Asyl officials are in too close touch with the police not to know how their guests spend their time—they are told that they have come to the wrong place, that it is the workhouse where they ought to be. And to the workhouse they must go, unless they prefer to rely on their own resources to provide themselves with shelter, a somewhat dangerous experiment for a loafer to try, as in Austria vagrants are sent to penal workhouses.

Even if a respectable man, having failed to find work, must in the end go to the workhouse, he has no reason to complain of his treatment; for the Vienna workhouse is organised on lines that differ fundamentally from those on which English work-

houses are organised, the purpose for which it is maintained being not to punish the destitute for being destitute, but to help them to become self-supporting. The old and feeble are not allowed to go there, while the children whom their parents take with them stay only one night, and are then sent on to their own special home. For the place is reserved exclusively for persons capable of earning their own living. Such of these as have a settlement in Vienna may go there; and so long as they do the work given them to do and behave well, they may remain there. Still, it is taken for granted when they arrive, that they have no wish to remain, that they have come as mere sojourners, in fact, and they are treated accordingly. One day every week they are allowed to go out to look for work, and are told where to look; for the workhouse officials are in telephonic communication with all the labour bureaux in the city. If there is a vacant post, they have the chance therefore of obtaining it. Meanwhile they are well fed, well housed and kindly treated. They must work, but not much harder than they would have to work to maintain themselves outside. On Sundays and holidays, indeed, they need do nothing at all; and for anything they do over and above their allotted task any day, they are paid. Thus they are able, if they are industrious, to earn enough while in the house wherewith to start life afresh when they leave it. The majority of them do not earn much, it is true; one-fourth, indeed, earn nothing at all; while another fourth earn only about a krone a week. Still, the blame of this lies

with themselves, not the institution, for there are both men and women there who earn six times as much.

The full cost per head in the workhouse is only 10d. a day; and there are beds there for 520 men and 60 women. They are practically never all occupied, however, the average number of inmates being in winter 500 and in summer only 300. Considering how comfortable they are made, and how well they are fed, it seems surprising that they who go there rarely remain more than a few weeks. The reason of this is, however, that no one is allowed to remain, even for a single day, unless he does his full amount of work and conducts himself well. Idleness and insubordination are put down with a firm hand; and any loafer who enters the place is turned out at once, if he persists in loafing. For it is organised for the exclusive benefit of men who wish to work; and precautions are taken to prevent its being frequented by men whose aim is to shirk working.

It is not only while in Vienna itself that the work-seeker has a different measure meted out to him from that meted out to the work-shirker. If a respectable man being out of employment goes on the tramp in Lower Austria, he may not only sleep every night for 43 nights—sup and breakfast, too—in a Relief-in-Kind station, but he may have his dinner there every day for 43 days. These stations, which are within half a day's walking distance of one another throughout the province, are casual wards organised on the same lines as the Asyl. They are maintained at the cost of the province for the benefit of the respectable unemployed, and loafers

are not allowed to cross their threshold. To be admitted a man must prove that he has been in regular employment within the previous 43 days, and his papers must show a clean record. When he has once been to a station he may not return there until three months have elapsed ; and if, after being on the tramp for 43 days, he has not found regular employment, he forfeits his right to go to any station at all. He may forfeit it before if it can be proved that he has refused work offered him under fair conditions, or has not turned to good account the opportunities given him of finding work. At each station there is a labour bureau, and one of the duties of the officials is to keep in close touch with the employers in the district so as to be able to tell all comers where—if anywhere—work is to be had.

While the work-seeker is thus helped on in his way, the work-shirker meets with scant mercy. By Austrian law any person convicted of begging, or of allowing those dependent on him to beg, or convicted of wandering about without visible means of support, may be sent to a penal workhouse, although infinite precautions are taken to guard against any one being sent there who merits a better fate. A penal workhouse,¹ as organised in Austria, is not only a prison where rigid discipline is maintained, but also a reformatory where the idle are given opportunities of overcoming their evil propensity. All who go there are taught how to work, are forced to work, and are punished if they try to shirk working. At the same time they are given a strong motive for working well,

¹ *Vide* page 58, "An Austrian Penal Workhouse."

as the fact is brought home to them that their one chance either of shortening their stay there, or of rendering it even fairly comfortable, lies in working with all their heart and soul. An inmate must remain there three full years, unless in the meantime he can convince the director and the Board of Managers that he has turned over a new leaf, and may be trusted to try to earn an honest livelihood. And the only way he can convince them is by working hard and behaving well so as to secure promotion from the third class, in which new arrivals are placed, to the second; and from the second, to the first. Until he is in the first class there is no hope of their releasing him.

In Austria no one thinks the worse of a man for going to the Asyl, or a Relief-in-Kind station; he may even go to the workhouse without being looked on askance; but, if ever he crosses the threshold of a penal workhouse, he is regarded as lost. Among the working classes the feeling is strong that it is more disgraceful by far to be sent to a penal workhouse, than to be sent to prison.

Although in Vienna much is done for the poor, the burden entailed by poor relief is by no means overwhelming. In 1904, the full cost of indoor relief, outdoor relief, and sick relief, together with the cost of administration, was only £998,299; and of this, £232,814 was obtained from private sources. At that time the town was providing 32,500 adults—old men and women for the most part—with allowances ranging in amount from 30 kronen to 6 kronen a month; it was maintaining 7,474 more in old-age homes and other institutions; and was defraying the

cost of the Asyl and workhouse. It was supporting, or contributing to the support of, 11,534 children who were either with their own relatives, or were boarded-out; and was maintaining 3,334, in orphanages, etc. It defrayed the cost of the 27,400 babies who passed through the Foundling Hospital, and of the 12,681 children who were temporarily in homes or hospitals. It also provided 82,000 boys and girls with school books, and contributed generously to many private philanthropic societies. Roughly speaking, in Vienna the cost to the town of poor relief together with sick relief is, per head of the population, 8s. 4d., or 8s. 2d. less than in London. It would, it is true, be considerably higher than it is, were it not that it is only persons who have a settlement there who are relieved at the cost of the town; and to obtain a settlement a residence of ten years is necessary. It is calculated that nearly 30 per cent. of the inhabitants have no settlement there; the cost of any relief given to them, therefore, falls not on Vienna, but on the communes where they have a settlement.

The Vienna Poor Relief system, as a system, is excellent, so far at least as I can judge; and I have watched the working of ten different systems in my time. The mere fact of its being founded on the assumption that discrimination must be used in dealing with the poor is, in itself, to be accounted unto it as a merit. It certainly aims at securing for the aged the means of passing their declining days in comfort; aims, too, at helping all who are really seeking for work, while harrying those who are on loafing bent. It has its weak points, of course; and

its weakest, sad to relate, is one that concerns children. The boys and girls the town supports are thrown completely on their own resources as soon as they are fourteen. No official arrangements whatever are in force for giving them a helping hand just when they are starting life, and therefore need it most. From the day they are apprenticed—or if girls, placed out as servants—they may drift where they will, as their Guardians are freed from all responsibility with regard to them. This is a great defect, a defect that would be remarkable in any system, and is inexplicable in this special system, which claims, and with a fair amount of reason, to be the most humane in Europe. Fortunately it is one which there is good reason to hope will soon be removed: the Magistrat officials, indeed, are already at work, trying to devise means for removing it. Then, another defect is that it is not necessarily merit that decides who shall, and who shall not, be admitted to the old-age homes; another, again, that the pensions the old people receive, while waiting to be admitted, are so small that they cannot live on them.

None the less were the administration of the system as good as the system itself, the poor would still, I am inclined to think, be on the whole better cared for in Vienna than in any other capital, with the single exception of Copenhagen. Unfortunately, however, although there is no other town where the Poor Law is administered with quite the same genial kindness as in Vienna, there are many towns where it is administered more wisely. The Magistrat do their work well, it is true; but the Guardians are

often careless, nay, neglectful ; and in spite of being always stinted for money, nothing will make them realise that dole-giving is as demoralising as it is pauperising. Besides, they undertake to do more than they can do, as their wards are far too large. Then there is not that close co-operation between official relief and private charity that there ought to be, and that there would be, were the Zentralrath—an admirable institution—to meet fairly frequently, instead of almost never. The result is respectable old people are sometimes left half starved, while the worthless live in plenty, and even children are sorely neglected.

Poor Law administrators have, it must be admitted, great difficulties to contend against in Vienna, owing, for one thing, to the number of persons living there whose settlement is elsewhere ; for another, to the diverse nationalities of those who have a settlement there ; and for another, again, absurd as it may seem, to the fact that Vienna has for a thousand years been known as the City of the Golden Heart. All who are destitute there must be relieved, whether they have a settlement or not ; but if they have not, the cost of their relief must be recovered from the commune where they have. And when a commune is asked to pay its debts, it feels itself injured, and always begins by refusing. Then, if a little Czech child is boarded-out with a German foster-mother—or German child, with a Czech ; or either a German or a Czech, with a Slovak or a Croat—questions are asked in the Reichsrath, and there is straightway a battle royal in which all the rival nationalities join. Still, these difficulties are as nothing

compared with those the Vienna Poor Law officials have to face, thanks to the town's Golden Heart.

I once ventured to ask a distinguished Austrian Poor Law administrator why there were so many beggars in Vienna. For beggars abound there, and yet there ought to be none there at all, seeing that not only has the town a most humane Poor Relief system, but it has private societies without number always on the alert to give a helping hand to those who need it.

His answer was a rueful wail. Evidently the word beggars was to him what a red rag is to a bull.

"Well may you ask!" he exclaimed. "The town is full of them, and it is all because of that Golden Heart of which Vienna is so proud. Were it not for that heart, we could be rid of the lot in a week. But what can we do when the whole population is against us?"

A week or two before, the Magistrat, it seems, had issued orders that any one found begging should be arrested—begging is contrary to law in Vienna as elsewhere. The first person to be arrested, as it chanced, was a woman with a baby in her arms, whereupon all Vienna rose up in its wrath; and, after denouncing the Magistrat as brutal, nearly lynched the police. It was only after something like a riot that the prisoner was taken into court. By that time popular feeling was running so high that the judge dismissed the case, and reprimanded the police for being so tactless as to arrest a woman with a baby—the baby was a sham one, as it happened. In these circumstances, if there are beggars in Vienna, the blame can hardly be said to rest either with the Poor Relief system in force there, or with its administrators.

AN AUSTRIAN PENAL WORKHOUSE OR LOAFERS' REFORMATORY

SOME twenty years ago, the Lower Austrian Landtag proclaimed war to the death against the whole loafer tribe. They were to be worried and harassed in all possible ways, it was decreed ; no rest for their feet was to be given to them, no place on which to lay their heads. The charitable were exhorted to withhold from them all help, even bread and water ; and the clergy were called upon to denounce from the pulpit the bestowal of alms on them as a crime. Begging and vagrancy were forbidden under a penalty of three months' imprisonment ; and orders were issued that any able-bodied man, or woman, found without visible means of support should promptly be arrested. Everything indeed that could be done was done to make life in the province eminently unpleasant for lazy ne'er-do-weels and sturdy beggars, with a view to forcing them either to mend their ways, or seek a home elsewhere.

To pass Anti-vagrancy Laws and frame regulations for the suppression of mendicancy is an easy matter, however ; it is in the enforcement of them that the difficulty lies. The Austrian authorities

were not long in discovering that, let them do or say what they would, the charitable would go on giving ; and that therefore it was practically impossible, through sheer lack of space, to send to prison every man found begging. And what was still more serious, there was strong evidence that professional loafers—the worst class of all—would, as a matter of choice, rather pass three months in prison than work the whole year round. As often as not the very day these men obtained their liberty, they betook themselves straight back to their old calling. Evidently if persons of this sort were to be dealt with effectually, they must be kept under restraint for a much longer time than was possible, for their offence, in an ordinary prison. It was therefore decided, thanks in a great measure to the exertions of Herr Schöffel, one of the five members of the Landtag Executive, to build a Zwangsarbeitshaus, *i.e.*, a Penal Workhouse or Reformatory for Loafers.

According to the official report on the subject, this Zwangsarbeitshaus was established not so much as a place of punishment, as a place where the “Arbeitsscheuen” should be “kept at work, made to understand the value of work, and have a love of work aroused in them.” That in this it has succeeded it would be rash indeed to say ; but at any rate it has certainly been the means of bringing about a remarkable change in Lower Austria. Before it was in existence the whole province was the happy hunting-ground of tramps, itinerant musicians, bear-leaders, comb-sellers, and the rest of the set whose natural inclination is to live at the

cost of their fellows. Charity was demanded almost as a right; and in lonely districts threats were resorted to—even violence by no means unfrequently—if whining failed to extort alms. At the present time, excepting in Vienna, there is less chance of meeting an able-bodied beggar in Lower Austria than in Middlesex. In the course of the year that followed the opening of the Zwangsarbeitshaus, the convictions under the Vagrancy Act decreased by sixty per cent.

This penal workhouse is at Korneuburg, a village a few miles distant from Vienna. It is a huge place: in the main building alone there is space enough for a thousand prisoners, or Zwänglinge, *i.e.*, the coerced ones, as the inmates are called. From its appearance it might easily be mistaken for a fortress; for it is completely cut off from the rest of the world by high walls; and at the entrance guards with loaded guns are stationed. Should any one attempt to escape, he carries his life in his hand. The most rigid military discipline is maintained: hard labour with scant rations is the order of the day; and he who will not work has but small chance of eating. The only advantage the inmates have over prisoners in the ordinary jails, is that the length of their stay in the Zwangsarbeitshaus is determined, not by the sentence of any judge, but by their own conduct. The harder they work and the better they behave themselves, the sooner they regain their liberty. Under no circumstances, however, may they be detained longer than three years. While they are there every care is taken to treat each one of them, so far as possible, accord-

ing to his merits; but then it rests with them to prove that they have merits. The official assumption is that every man who enters a Zwangsarbeitshaus is worthless, although of course not irredeemably worthless; and it is interesting to note that, on this point, the opinion even of the populace is in perfect agreement with that of the authorities. Among the working classes in Austria a visit to a relief station, the Vienna Asyl, or even a workhouse, is held to entail no disgrace whatever; but a sojourn in a Zwangsarbeitshaus is looked upon as a most ignominious experience. To be sent there is regarded, in fact, as being stamped as one who wishes to prey on his fellows, to eat the bread for which they work.

The Korneuburg Zwangsarbeitshaus is reserved exclusively for males who are able-bodied, in full possession of their mental faculties, and above eighteen years of age. In order to be sent there a man must be convicted in open court of an offence against the Vagrancy Law which came into force in 1885, *i.e.*, of wandering about without visible means of support; of begging, or in any way appealing for charity; of sending children out to beg; or of refusing, while destitute and out of employment, to undertake work offered under conditions approved of by the local authorities. Although any able-bodied person found guilty under this law may be sent to a Zwangsarbeitshaus, whether he be sent there or not rests with the judge, who in deciding the point is guided by the man's previous record. Under no circumstances would this sentence be passed on any one who could prove that he had been honestly

trying to earn his own living, and had failed through no fault of his own. The Korneuburg institution is for the punishment of Lower Austrians alone; and should a native of any other division of the empire be sent there, he is promptly passed on to his own province; unless, indeed, as is often the case, the authorities of this province prefer defraying the cost of his maintenance at Korneuburg.

Between July 1st, 1901, and June 30th, 1902, there were 811 prisoners in Korneuburg, 293 of whom were sent there in the course of that year. Of these 293—

81 were between 18 and 24 years of age.

52	"	"	24	"	30	"	"
64	"	"	30	"	40	"	"
66	"	"	40	"	50	"	"
27	"	"	50	"	60	"	"
3	"	above			60	"	"

One hundred and fifty-five of them were born in towns; six were foreigners; and, what is noteworthy, there was not a single native of a maritime district among them; and only one Jew. Almost all professions were represented: there were 139 daily labourers, 8 waiters, 8 factory hands, 15 coachmen, 9 shoemakers, 8 locksmiths, 8 carpenters, 7 clerks, 2 architects, 2 sculptors, a commercial traveller, and a book-keeper. Two of the men seem to have belonged to the "leisure" class; at least, they had never had any recognised trade or profession; 144 of them had previously been in prison for theft, fraud, assault, incendiarism, or some other crime; and out of the whole 293 only 22 had ever been married.

The inmates of the Korneuburg institution are divided into three classes, each of which is kept entirely apart from the other two. On his arrival a man is placed in the third class; and there is no chance of his being allowed to leave, before the expiration of his full three years' term, unless he can make his way into the first. No matter to which class he belongs, he is kept hard at work practically the whole day long. At five in the morning the great bell rings; and by six, all the inmates must be washed, dressed, have made their beds, eaten their breakfasts—bread and soup—and be ready for the day's task. They work from six o'clock until eleven, when they have dinner. At this meal the food served, although of the plainest kind, is good in quality, sufficient—in the opinion of experts—in quantity, and thoroughly well cooked. From half-past eleven until half-past twelve is the recreation hour, which the men who work indoors must pass walking about in the great courtyard. Those who have anything to smoke, may smoke at this time; and they may all talk as much as they like to members of their own class, always providing they abstain from reminiscences of their former evil doings. From half-past twelve to six in winter—in summer seven—is work again; then comes an hour's recreation and the evening meal. Work goes on, too, in winter from seven to eight.

Whenever the nature of the work allows it a fixed task, proportionate to his strength and ability, is allotted to each man every day; and this he must do or woe betide him: to the work-shirker no mercy is

shown. He passes his days in solitude, with bread and water for his fare, and a plank bed to sleep on ; and if this *régime* fail to make him see the error of his ways, confinement in a dark cell is his portion. Strangely enough, considering the previous lives of these people, the great majority of them settle down to their work quite diligently, when once they understand the measure that otherwise will be dealt out to them. It is the exception rather than the rule for them to be subjected to any special discipline either for idleness or anything else. On an average only about one-third of the prisoners at Korneuburg are ever really punished at all ; and of these, fifty per cent. are punished only once. Still, there are, of course, black sheep among them ; and, as we shall see later, a case has occurred of a man's baffling the authorities completely, setting them openly at defiance, and never doing a stroke of work during the whole time he was in the Zwangsarbeitshaus.

The prisoners have certainly every inducement to work ; for it is by work and work alone that they can either shorten their stay in the reformatory, or render their lot tolerable while they are there. So long as they show any signs of their old loafing propensity, they are kept in the third class, *i.e.*, that to the members of which no indulgence of any kind is allowed ; while if they throw themselves heartily into what is given them to do, they are soon promoted to the second class. Then, if they not only work well, but behave well, and prove themselves to be trustworthy, they are placed in the first class after a time. And once there life is comparatively pleasant.

As a further incentive to industry, the men are paid regular wages for any work they do over and above what defrays the cost of their maintenance in the institution. They must, however, leave one-half of the money thus earned to accumulate until the time comes for them to leave Korneuburg, so that they may then have something wherewith to start life afresh. What they receive at the end of every week they may, if they choose, send to their relatives in the outside world; or they may, and almost invariably do, spend it on procuring for themselves little luxuries—tobacco, white bread, butter, cheese, coffee. In some few special cases the men are allowed to buy wine or beer, but only in very small quantities. The earnings of the best among them, however, are but meagre. During the year 1901–2, 330 prisoners were released from Korneuburg, and only 182 of them had managed to save more than ten florins each; 109 had each saved between five and ten florins; 23, less than five florins; and 16 had saved nothing at all.

The third-class inmates work in the Zwangsarbeits-haus itself, and whenever possible at the calling for which they have been trained. Some are employed as carpenters, others as shoemakers, tailors, locksmiths, etc. About eighty are engaged at the great steam laundry, where the linen from most of the public institutions in the district is washed; and nearly the same number make baskets, mats, paperbags, etc. The men in the second class help to do the housework of the reformatory, to clean and cook; for women-servants are, of course, never allowed to cross its threshold. Some of them are employed at

the gasworks; others, in the garden; others, again, on the farm attached to the institution. With regard to the first-class inmates a rather peculiar arrangement is in force: the authorities hire them out in gangs of from ten to twenty to the various employers of labour in the district. With each gang an official overseer is sent to keep the employés to their work, on the one hand; and see that they are properly treated by their employers, on the other. The authorities make the contract, receive the wages, and are responsible for the work and good behaviour of the men. If the distance be not too great, the gangs return to the reformatory every night, otherwise only when the special work for which they are hired is finished. In the latter case the employers provide them with food and lodging. It is only the particularly trustworthy men who are ever hired out, owing to the opportunity it gives them for running away. Any one, however, who is caught trying to escape, or who is proved to have connived at the escape of another, is at once put back into the third class, where he is quite secure from any temptation to repeat his offence. No one is ever hired out except at his own wish.

The full responsibility for the management of the Korneuburg reformatory, and for the well-being and safe-keeping of all who live there, rests upon the director, an official who has at once more varied and more difficult duties to fulfil than almost any other man in Austria—barring the Emperor. Compared with his lines of life those of an ordinary jail governor are cast in quite easy and pleasant places. The very

raison d'être of the institution under his care is, it must be remembered, not so much to punish men for being loafers, as to take from them all wish to loaf—a much more appalling task. While, therefore, he is bound to enforce strict discipline, and to deal ruthlessly with the incorrigible, he must always be on the alert to detect and encourage any signs of improvement, even the faintest; for it is only by giving them a helping hand at the right moment, just when they are at the turning of the ways, that there is any chance of converting the sort of men who go to Zwangsarbeitshäuser into useful members of society. As they are morally all more or less on the invalid list, they stand sorely in need of careful and delicate handling; and each one of them must be dealt with individually, if any good is to be done among them. The success of the Korneuburg institution is due in a great measure to the fact that Herr Lenzer, who was until recently its director, was heart and soul in his work. He brought his personal influence to bear on his charges; dealt out among them encouragement, praise and blame with nice discrimination; and he tried to humanise them, above all, to arouse in them a sense of self-respect.

Although the director has practically a free hand in the management of the reformatory, he is by no means an autocrat. He must render a full and exact account of all that passes there to the head of the department responsible to the Landtag for him and all that he does. This official, or his deputy, and a representative of the Viceroy of Lower Austria, visit Korneuburg once a fortnight; and there, to-

gether with the director, the resident priest, and the house surgeon, they hold a Board meeting. They carefully examine the official register of the institution, in which is entered day by day everything that occurs there—who is punished and why, and who earns commendation. They decide all questions relating to the diet and the work of the prisoners; and without their consent no one may be either raised to a higher class, or released. The director has the right to remove a man from a higher to a lower class, if he deem it advisable; but, in this case, he must explain and justify the proceeding at the next fortnightly meeting. A prisoner may at any time claim to be brought before the board and heard in his own defence, should he think himself to be unjustly treated by the director; and every precaution is taken to guard against his being prevented from availing himself of this privilege.

Every morning the director of the reformatory holds a sort of informal court of justice, when all with whom things have not gone smoothly during the previous twenty-four hours—who have left undone what they ought to have done, or who have done what they ought not—are brought before him for judgment. He sits on a raised platform at the end of a large room, and has by his side a clerk who enters in the register the details of each case in turn. Soldiers are stationed in the lobby and the prisoners are carefully guarded. This is by no means an unnecessary precaution; for sudden outbursts of passionate violence do occur sometimes, it seems, though very rarely. The morning I was in the court,

however, the proceedings were eminently decorous. To judge by their own account of themselves, the accused that day were a most exemplary set, as innocent of offence as the fleeciery of lambs. They had all, with one exception, some plausible tale or other to tell to explain away the evidence against them: one man, indeed, conducted his case with an aplomb which would have won for him applause even at Old Bailey. What was particularly notable was the boldness with which they defended themselves. Evidently they knew by experience that what they said in court was privileged, and would, therefore, have no unpleasant influence on the after relations between themselves and the officials, who were their accusers. They had perfect faith, too, it was easy to see, in the director, not only in his justice but in his kindness: they seemed to look on him, in fact, as their natural protector, one whose duty it was to watch over them, and see that those wicked under-officials did them no wrong. For the said under-officials, especially the labour-masters, their feeling was manifestly much the same as that which our city arabs entertain for the County Council's "kid-catchers."

Evidently the director understood to a nicety the sort of men with whom he had to deal; for whereas he cut short with scant ceremony some of the most plausible stories, he took infinite trouble in sifting the evidence in the only case in which the accused offered no defence. None of the offences were of a serious nature; for if an inmate commits a crime he is sent to the ordinary law courts to be tried. One man had

—purely by mischance according to his own account, through *malice prepense* according to that of the officials—upset a can of soup, the breakfast of a comrade. What in this case told strongly against the prisoner was that accidents of a similar nature had previously befallen him, and always to the detriment of the same person. Nor was he the only one whom this kind of petty childish spite had led astray. Then one man whose strength lay in his fists, not his wits, had tried to settle some point in dispute by means of a fight. Another had secured possession of a strong knife under circumstances that suggested doubts as to the legality of the purpose for which he intended it. Some had resorted to malingering; others had destroyed, accidentally, of course, as they maintained, the material given them for their work; others again had tried to obtain at the expense of their neighbours' pouches more than their fair share of tobacco. And the director meted out among them even-handed justice, scoldings, warnings, threats, and, in the case of old offenders, punishments ranging in severity from dry bread for breakfast to solitary confinement.

On entering this reformatory the first thing that strikes one is its cleanliness: every part of the building is as free from dust and dirt as a well-kept private house. The dormitories are quite models in their way, large, with plenty of fresh air, and as neat as hands can make them. Every bedstead is provided with a thick straw mattress, a pillow, and two warm blankets. The supply of soap and water is unlimited, and washing is strongly insisted upon. Another notable characteristic of the place is the

business-like bustle that goes on there all day. There is no loitering about, no trailing of feet, every one is kept on the alert, and seems to have just as much on his hands as he can manage. The workshops are well ventilated, and in winter carefully heated.

In each shop some twenty men work together under the supervision of a labour-master, or his deputy, a Stube-vater or Room-father. The office of a Stube-vater is regarded by the prisoners as a sort of Blue Ribbon: it is the highest distinction they can obtain; and it is only given to such among them as are exceptionally skilful in their handicraft and thoroughly trustworthy. The special duty of a Stube-vater is to keep order in his room during the absence of the labour-master, to see that the men go on steadily with their work, and indulge neither in chattering nor in horse-play. And this he does very effectually, judging by what I saw during two impromptu visits I paid to the workshops. In every room we found on both occasions the men hard at work when we entered. And a terrible set they were.

"Some of the most precious scoundrels in Europe are in the Korneuburg Zwangsarbeitshaus," a member of the Reichsrath, who is an expert in all that relates to the criminal classes, once told me. "Compared with them many of the prisoners in our jails are quite respectable characters." And unless the expression of their faces belies them greatly, the judgment was none too harsh. Never did I see so many evil-looking men clubbed together as at Korneuburg, unless, indeed, at Merxplas; cruelty, deceit and cunning were in most cases stamped on every feature. Physically,

the majority of them, strangely enough, were above rather than below the average; and they seemed to be fairly intelligent—some of them, indeed, quite startlingly “cute.”

The first time I was at Korneuburg the director recommended strongly that we should leave unvisited the room which is set apart for the most unruly section of the third-class inmates; for he was by no means inclined to accept any responsibility for what they might say or do. The men in this room are of a somewhat different type from those in the other parts of the building: they are more unmanageable, more violent, possibly more dangerous; but I doubt whether they are not, on the whole, better men than some of their more amenable and plausible comrades. The glances they gave us when we appeared at the door were certainly unpleasant; still, the majority of them responded to our “guten Tag,” although only after a very perceptible pause, and with a little gasp of astonishment. Evidently they were not accustomed either to the giving or the receiving of greetings. When we were once in their midst, however, with the door securely shut behind us, they became more friendly; and they seemed rather glad than otherwise to have the chance of exchanging a word with a stranger. They answered all our questions quite civilly, without any of that painful cringing which characterised some of the inmates; and they appeared quite pleased when their handiwork was admired. A great morose-looking fellow who certainly began by resenting our visit, rushed off eagerly, a few minutes later, to fetch for us

to see a beautiful mat he had made. One man smiled gently to himself when he overheard a chance remark that there were no Zwangsarbeitshäuser in England. Should the opportunity ever be given him, he will undoubtedly betake himself straight to this country.

The solitary confinement cells at Korneuburg do not differ materially from those in any ordinary English prison. In one of them we found, on my first visit, a boy about twenty who greeted us with a perfect storm of words in some incomprehensible dialect. He was in a state of the wildest excitement, tearing his hair for the lack of anything else on which to wreak his vengeance. His offence, it seems, was a violent assault on one of his companions. Next door to him was a man who on the previous day had torn a suit of clothes to shreds. He was heartily penitent, however, and implored the director in quite abject terms to overlook his offence. Never would he do such a thing again, he declared, for that he would pledge his word of honour. The phrase had an odd ring in a Zwangsarbeitshaus.

In another cell there was a prisoner of a very different kind. He never raised his head when the door was opened, but sat there quite calmly and quietly with his hands clasped before him. He was a man about thirty, with a dark, well-cut face and a splendid physique—a soldier one could see at a glance. He gave a little contemptuous shrug of his shoulders when the director asked him how much longer he intended to persist in his

refusal to work ; but he never uttered a word during the whole time a full record of his misdeeds was being given. On his arrival at the reformatory, some months before, he had announced his determination to do no work of any sort or kind so long as he was kept there. The director had in turn brought argument, persuasion and punishment to bear on him, but in vain ; for although the man passed all his time in this dark cell, and fasted three days a week, he stood his ground firmly : work he would not.

There was something terrible in the man's silence as he sat there, in his very indifference : he paid not the slightest heed to what the director was saying. It was not until a strong personal appeal was made to him to explain—not for his own sake, but for that of others—why he was so bent on setting the authorities at defiance, that he ever even glanced in our direction. Then he hesitated for a moment, as if in doubt ; his face flushed ; and at length, though evidently only after a fierce struggle, he began his tale in a low bitter tone. He had been a soldier in Algiers, he said, had landed at Trieste without a penny, and had made his way into Lower Austria on foot. During the whole of that long journey he had sought work from early morning until late at night, he declared, but had found none. He was starving and asked for charity, whereupon he was sent to the Zwangsarbeitshaus. "If they would have given me work outside I would have done it gladly," he said, "but work here, never ! I would rather die." His voice shook with passion

as he spoke. "I don't mind telling you all this," he added, as if to excuse himself for having broken his silence; "because you come from England where things are different."

The man was speaking the truth, I am very much inclined to think, though perhaps not quite the whole truth. He had no doubt sought for work, but he had sought for it as an Ishmael, and he had resented the not finding of it in a true Ishmaelish fashion. It was not without good reason, I found, that the police had arrested him when they did. Still, a Zwangsarbeitshaus was certainly not the right place for him; for he was no loafer, whatever else he might be.

The Korneuburg reformatory is not self-supporting, nor does there seem to be any chance that it ever will be. Its initial expenses, including the cost of building, amounted to 548,755 florins, to which sum the State contributed 300,000 florins, and the province of Lower Austria the rest. In the year for which I have statistics, the working expenses of the institution, including the cost of maintaining the prisoners, were 339,008 florins, and its income—the yield of the labour of the prisoners, etc.—was 278,504 florins. Thus there was a deficit of 60,504 florins (about £5,042) which the Landtag must make good, as the State does not contribute to the support of Zwangsarbeitshäuser when once they are in working order. Roughly speaking, a man who goes to Korneuburg defrays by his work, on an average, 80 per cent. of the cost of keeping him there.

As institutions for the punishment of loafers penal

workhouses in Austria are certainly a success ; as reformatories, too, there is strong evidence that they are doing useful work. Of the 330 men who quitted Korneuburg in the course of the year 1901-2, 280 were released before the expiration of their three years' term, owing to their industry and good conduct. Still, the director shook his head emphatically when it was suggested that these men would now become respectable, hard-working, self-supporting members of society. Some few of them might, he thought, but not many. "They are not of the stuff out of which decent men are made," he declared. None the less he was firmly convinced that, with very few exceptions, those who are sent to Korneuburg are, when they leave it, the better for their sojourn. While there they lose, through sheer force of habit, some at least of their "Arbeitsscheu." They come to look on labour, in fact, as an evil of course, but a necessary evil, one from which there is no possible escape. Thus, when they are out in the world again, if work comes in their way, they do it almost instinctively. Then they always take away with them from the reformatory a very wholesome dread of being called upon to pay it a second visit. The laziest among them thinks twice before he loafs, knowing as he does now the fate that is in store for loafers. Of the 293 men who were sent to Korneuburg in 1901-2, only seven had ever been there before.

At the present time the percentage of second-term men among the inmates is considerably higher than it was then ; but the reason of this lies, I am inclined to think, not in the institution but elsewhere.

POOR RELIEF IN BERLIN

ONE reason why the system of poor-relief administration in force in Berlin is fraught with interest for us, as a nation, is that it differs fundamentally from the system in force in London. Berlin, it is true, has its Poor Commissioners just as London has its Poor Law Guardians; but, although both Commissioners and Guardians are honorary officials, they have not much else in common. In London the Guardians are the Poor Law authorities: it is they who decide what shall be done for the poor, and who superintend the doing of it; they are the controllers of the administration of relief, the actual work of relieving the destitute and investigating the causes of their destitution being in the hands of paid officials. The Guardians play the master, in fact, and carry the purse, the paid officials being their servants. In Berlin it is otherwise. There it is the paid officials who control the honorary, not the honorary who control the paid; there the paid official does, in part at any rate, the work done here by the Guardian; while the Poor Commissioner does the work done here by the paid official—he sifts and sorts the poverty-stricken and deals out among them food and clothing, or the means wherewith to obtain these things.

Whether the Berlin system, or the London, is the better is open to argument, of course ; for that both of them have defects and both have merits, cannot be denied. Still, the late Sir Robert Morier, who had the right to speak on the subject with authority, gave the palm, unhesitatingly, to the Berlin system ; because, under this system, he maintained, not only has the average citizen assigned to him, when called upon to act as Poor Commissioner, the very duties he is best qualified to fulfil, but citizens of all degrees, "the millionaire and the mechanic are yoked together in the same work, and have to do it on the same terms." And this, from the social standpoint, is, he held, a supreme merit. For my own part, every time I go to Berlin I wonder the more how a system of Poor Law administration can be at once so good as that in force there, and so bad—judged, of course, by the results it yields. Every time I go there, too, I come away the more convinced that if we wish to mend our own Poor Law administration here, in London, it is there, by using the system in force there as a warning in some respects and as a model in others, that we shall best learn how to do it.

Berlin is divided into 326 districts, and in each district a list is kept of the ratepayers living there, who are liable to be called upon to act as the town's honorary officials. Men of all classes are on this list, they who work with their hands, they who work with their heads, and they who work not at all ; for every ratepayer, no matter how rich or how poor, may by law be summoned to join the Municipality's honorary staff, as the town has a legal claim on the

services of all its citizens. There would be no need for a list at all, therefore, were it not that Berlin, being alive to the fact that the services of some of its citizens are better worth having than those of others, chooses to discriminate among them with a view to securing the best. A man must be at any rate fairly respectable and law-abiding for his name to appear in the District List ; although, on the other hand, he may be as democratic as he chooses, or as reactionary. Whether it does or does not appear there, however, depends neither on his own wishes nor yet on his own convenience ; but solely on whether in the estimation of the community, as represented by the Municipality and its officials, he is or is not capable of rendering useful service to the town.

Municipal Councillors are the only honorary officials in Berlin who are elected directly by the ratepayers ; all the rest are appointed to their various offices by these Councillors, who select them from among the persons whose names are on the District Lists. Thus Poor Commissioners, instead of being chosen, as English Guardians are, by the ratepayers in response to their own request, are nominated by the Municipal Council without any regard whatever even to their protests. No matter how much they may dislike the work of a Commissioner, or how difficult it may be for them to spare the time in which to do it, they must, the law ordains, accept the office when it is given to them, unless they can prove that they are unable to fulfil the duties it entails owing to physical weakness, or frequent absence from the city on business. A man

who already holds an honorary office cannot, however, be appointed Poor Commissioner against his will; nor can any paid functionary of the town or State. The appointment is for six years. Still a Commissioner may, if he chooses, resign office when he has served for three years.

Although the Municipal Council has the right to appoint practically any one whom it chooses as Poor Commissioner, it cannot, of course, compel him to act; for after all a horse may be taken to the water, but a horse cannot be forced to drink. Still, if he refuses to act, it can and does punish him by inflicting on him social penalties as well as pecuniary loss. Whoever, when nominated as Commissioner, refuses to act without legitimate excuse, forfeits certain of his rights as a citizen. During the six years he ought to hold office he cannot vote at any election, nor take any part whatever in public affairs; and he must pay higher rates than his fellows, higher by from one-eighth to one-fourth. In other ways, too, things are made uncomfortable for him; for he is looked upon as a bad citizen, one who shirks the duty he owes to his town; and in Berlin society and the authorities are at one in taking care not to encourage bad citizenship by showing to it undue toleration. Thus, although many men try to evade acting as Poor Commissioners, very few actually refuse to act.

As the Commissioners are nominated by the Municipal Council, they are, of course, subordinate to it; not on them, therefore, but on the Council, as the direct representative of the ratepayers, rests

primarily the responsibility for the relief of the poor, as for the management of all the business of the town. This Council, however, as a Council, has nothing whatever to do with the administration of relief, nor even with the control of the administration, as it delegates to another Council, the Magistrat, its duties as an executive body together with its authority as a controlling body. The Magistrat is, in reality, the Executive Committee of the Municipal Council, although its members are not themselves members of that Council; and the chief business of the Council is to appoint the members of the Committee, *i.e.*, the Magistrat, to provide them with the money wherewith to do the work it entrusts to them, to provide them also with subordinate honorary officials—Poor Commissioners among others—to help them to do it, and to keep watch that the money is not wasted and the work is well done. It contents itself, in fact, with safeguarding the interests of the ratepayers, and leaves to the Magistrat the task of carrying on the business of the town.

The Magistrat consists of 34 members—*Stadträthe* is the name they bear—17 of whom are paid and hold office for twelve years, while 17 are unpaid and hold office for six years. Every member, however, whether paid or unpaid, is an expert in some branch of municipal work, and as such is attached to the department most concerned with that branch. Practically the unpaid Stadträthe are the expert advisers of the various departments, and the paid Stadträthe are the Managing Directors. Every department is under the control of a paid Stadtrath, who is directly

responsible for the work it does to the Chairman of the Magistrat, the Chief Bürgermaster, himself a paid official, who, in his turn, is responsible for the work of all the departments on the one hand to the Municipal Council, as the representative of the town, and on the other, to the City President, as the representative of the State.

Although the responsibility for the work of each department rests on the Stadtrath who is at its head, the work itself is done under the direction and supervision of a Board of Managers, of which he is Chairman. In the case of the Poor Law Department this Board is known as the Armendirektion, or Poor Board. It consists of three paid and two unpaid Stadträthe, twelve other paid officials, Magistrats Assessors, &c., seventeen Municipal Councillors and ten Bürgers' Deputies.

The Municipal Councillors and the Deputies, who are also honorary officials, merely attend the monthly meetings of the Board to receive reports as to what it is doing. It is by the other members that the actual work of the Department is done, that is by the Stadträthe and their paid assistants, with the help, of course, of a staff of subordinate officials. It is these members who, for executive purposes, constitute the Armendirektion; and they are, one and all, trained officials as well as experts in all that concerns the poor.

The Armendirektion is the Poor Law authority for the whole of Berlin; it has full control of the administration of relief in every part of the city. Each district has its Poor Commission or Poor Com-

missions, but all the Commissioners are under the immediate surveillance of the Direktion. It stands to them in the same relation as that in which the Local Government Board stands to Guardians here, but with this all-important difference, that whereas the Local Government Board can practically only restrain Guardians from acting, it can both restrain Commissioners from acting and force them to act. Thus it is able to secure uniformity of treatment for the poor throughout the city, with the result that there is in Berlin none of that rankling sense of injustice which prevails so widely in London, owing to the measure meted out to the destitute varying according to locality—being quite different, for instance, in Fulham from what it is in Southwark, and in Whitechapel from what it is in St. Pancras.

The Direktion is able also to secure comparative uniformity of expenditure on the part of the various Poor Commissions, as they are dependent on it for the money they spend. In Berlin, instead of each district supporting its own poor, the town as a whole supports all the poor, the necessary money being obtained from the yield of the municipal rates. The burden being thus a burden on the whole community, the control of the expenditure it entails is vested, of course, in the central authority—*i.e.*, in the Armen-direktion acting for the Municipal Council. And the control is certainly effective. The Direktion fixes for each district the minimum amount required there for the relief of the poor ; and at the beginning of every month this is sent to the Chairman of the Poor Commission, who, at the end of the month, must

render an exact account, signed by all his colleagues, of how he has spent it. If, as almost always happens, he spends more than is sent to him, the Direktion makes good the deficit, but not until it has sifted his accounts and decided that the extra expenditure was necessary.

Then not only does the Direktion watch over and control the administration of the whole poor-relief system, but it actually administers it for the greater part; for it keeps in its own hands the relief of all children, excepting those who are relieved together with their parents, and the relief of all the indoor poor. It is only the outdoor poor—*i.e.*, the recipients of and applicants for out-relief, whom it leaves to be dealt with by the Commissioners.

The Armendirektion is divided into three Boards, the General, the Workhouse and Refuge, and the Orphans'. The Orphans' Board, although under the same control as the other two, is kept quite apart from them, being housed in a separate building, and having its own staff of paid and honorary officials. The reason for this arrangement is that Berlin does not regard the children it supports as paupers; and being determined that they shall be under no temptation to develop into paupers, it takes care that they are not associated in any way with paupers or pauper officials, just as it takes care that they are not associated with criminals or jailers. No starving little street urchin is ever sent to the workhouse or any other pauper resort in Berlin; nor is any child who is accused of crime, or who is even caught red-handed, ever sent to prison. They and all their

youthful kith and kin are taken at once, when they are found, to the Orphans' Dépôt, in Alte Jakobstrasse, where they are handed over to the safe-keeping of its Director, the orphans' father. He, as the personal representative of the Orphans' Board, is responsible for the well-being of every orphan the town supports, that is, of all the children it supports, excepting those who are with their own relatives. For in Berlin it is not only the children who are motherless or fatherless who rank as orphans, but all those whose parents are in prison, or who are suffering from chronic disease and therefore cannot maintain them; or whose parents neglect them, ill-treat them, set them a bad example, or have deserted them. All these children are under the guardianship of the Orphans' Board; as by German law their parents have forfeited their rights over them, although they remain responsible for their maintenance.

The Berliners have many institutions of which they are proud; but of none of them are they so proud, or with such good reason, as of the Orphans' Dépôt, the refuge they provide for their destitute children. It is a wonderful place, a perfect model of skilful organisation combined with careful management; and the good that is done there is untold. Within its walls more baby lives are saved, more boys and girls are rescued from ruin, more little ruffians are made to see the error of their ways and stumbling little "Marchionesses" are kept from falling, than within those of any other building in the world. Its doors stand open night and day so that any child whom misfortune befalls, or to whom wrong is done, may

go there at once. Young apprentices who are ill-treated by their masters, little maids-of-all-work who are turned adrift by their mistresses, wend their way instinctively to the *Depôt*. If the police pick up a stray baby, or find one whose "farmer" is starving it, they transport it there at once, just as they transport there the lost children they meet with, the homeless and friendless. But although all the town's orphans go to the *Depôt*, they none of them go to stay; they are there only as sojourners, just waiting until the Director decides what can best be done with them. The average length of a visit is only six days, and no visit can last longer than six months.

The *Depôt* is a huge place, for not only is it the general Receiving House for all the destitute children in Berlin, and a refuge for them later in life, but it is the headquarters of the Orphans' Board. The whole administration of the Poor Law, indeed, so far as it concerns children, is carried on under its roof; is carried on, too, in all that regards personal relations with the children, through one man, the *Depôt* Director, acting of course as the representative of the Board, and under its close supervision. It is the Director who decides what shall be done with every child who enters the *Depôt* to ensure his developing, so far as in him lies, into a useful, self-supporting citizen. Not only does he find homes for all these children; but, unless the home be an institution, he watches over them in these homes, sees that they are well fed, well clothed, and properly cared for; and brings his personal influence to bear on them at every turn. He actually does, in fact, what,

were it not that he does it, one would say no man could do; for he is as a father to all Berlin's orphans, and their name is of course legion.

The Dépôt Director has many officials both honorary and paid to help him in his work. Every orphan, indeed, is under the care of no fewer than three honorary officials, a Waisenrath, a Pflegerin and a Vormund. When the Municipal Council appoints Poor Commissioners to help to take care of the adult poor, it appoints also Waisenräthe, or Orphans' Councillors, to help to take care of the children. There are three or more Councillors in every district, and their business is to watch over all the children there, excepting those who are living with their parents. They are the agents through whom the Orphans' Board pay the foster-mothers, and they are required to see the boarded-out children and report on them every month. The Pflegerinnen are the lady assistants of the Councillors and act as their deputies. The Vormünder, who are appointed not by the Municipal Council, but by the legal authorities, on the recommendation of the Councillors, are the children's guardians before the law. A Vormund has only one child under his care, and he is expected to interest himself personally in all his concerns.

Then every child who is boarded-out elsewhere than in Berlin is given a special guardian, who lives near his home, and who also has, as a rule, a lady assistant. All these honorary officials act under the Orphans' Board and in co-operation with the Dépôt Director. There is also a paid Inspector who

spends the whole of his time going round among the orphans to see that they are being properly educated, and are given the chance of cultivating any talent they may have. A foster-mother who allows a child to remain away from school unnecessarily, for a single day, forfeits her month's allowance; and a master who has an orphan as apprentice, and does not send him to a night school, is liable to punishment.

I once spent a morning with the Director at the *Depôt*, when I was amazed at the amount of work he did, and the ease with which he did it, thanks to the lines on which the place is organised. The Receiving House part of the building is divided into wards: there are separate wards for babies, for young children, for boys and for girls—both for those who have been respectably brought up and for those who have “just growed.” Then there are hospital wards, wards for convalescents, and wards that are reserved for the little criminals whom the State hands over to the *Depôt*. There are school wards, too; for however short be the time a child is at the *Depôt*, he has regular lessons every day in reading and writing, incidentally, too, in good manners and the importance of being truthful and honest. In another part of the building there is a Housewifery School, where the elder girls who are boarded-out in Berlin go every morning to learn how to cook, clean and wash, that they may become trained servants. Here also is a Servants' Home where these girls may go later, if out of place, or in need of rest. All the town's orphans, boys and girls alike, who are earning their

living in Berlin are encouraged to spend their Sunday evenings at the Dépôt.

A child who enters the Dépôt is seen at once by two officials, a doctor and an expert in dealing with the young. It is then lodged in the ward most suitable for it, where it is kept under close observation until the Director decides what can best be done with it. If it is found to be free from marked physical, mental or moral defect, it is boarded-out at once, provided it be a girl; for Berlin boards-out all its normal girls until they are 16. Its normal boys it boards-out only if they are under six; otherwise it sends them to Rummelsburg, a school organised on the cottage-home system. Still the boys who are once boarded-out are left with their foster-parents, if all goes well, until they are 15, when they are apprenticed. The boys, it must be noted, are turned out into the world a full year earlier than the girls.

Whoever wishes to receive a Dépôt child must apply personally to the Director to be placed on his foster-mothers' list; and by no means all who apply are placed there. He can and does pick and choose among them, for he has half a dozen applicants for every child he has to board-out. One woman, evidently the wife of a better-class artisan, burst into tears, the day I was at the Dépôt, when she found there was no baby for her. She had set her heart, she told us, on taking one home with her, one with blue eyes and golden hair! The Director himself hands over to the foster-mothers their charges, and it is to him that they deliver them up when the appointed time comes. A foster-father brought back a fine-looking

lad of 15, while I was there, but only to beg that he might keep him, as *die Mutter* did not wish to part with him. The Director there and then arranged that the boy should go on living in his old home, during his apprenticeship to a locksmith, and thereupon there was jubilation.

Great as are the advantages of the Berlin system in dealing with children sound in body and mind, they are infinitely greater in dealing with the feeble and diseased. As all the town's orphans are under one administration, the authorities there are not tempted, as our Poor Law Guardians are, to club together unsuitable cases, the half-witted with the whole-witted, or with the no-witted at all, to the detriment of the whole community. They can sift, and sort, and classify the afflicted according to their individual defects; and thus are able to secure for them, one and all, the exact treatment they require not only to relieve them, so far as they can be relieved, of their suffering, but to enable them to turn to good account any talent they may have. And they most of them have a talent of some sort in their fingers, if not in their heads.

If a child at the *Depôt* seems below the average in intelligence, he is carefully watched; and if it is found that he is merely stupid, he is boarded-out near some school where there are "special classes." In a special class there are never more than twelve children, and these work with their heads only two hours a day, devoting the rest of their school time to learning how to use their hands. If it is found, however, that he is too deficient mentally

to benefit even by the simple lessons given in a special class, he is sent to Dalldorf, the colony the town provides for its feeble-minded children. There any little brain power he may have is carefully cultivated, while infinite trouble is taken to render him dexterous enough to earn his own living by the work of his hands, without much help from his head. If he is epileptic, he is sent to the town's colony for epileptic children, where experts at once set to work to battle against his disease. Meanwhile he is carefully educated and fitted to earn his own living. The result is that hundreds of the very sort of children who in England grow up to be a curse to themselves and all around them, a heavy burden on the ratepayers to boot, are in Berlin put in the way of leading fairly happy useful lives, and are rendered self-supporting.

Then, if the child's defect is not mental, but physical, he is taken in hand by doctors without a moment's delay. If he shows signs of consumption, he is sent to a sanatorium. If he is deaf and dumb, or blind, he is boarded-out in Berlin, and is educated at the Deaf and Dumb—or the Blind—Institute, where a Housewifery School student, who lives near him, takes him every morning on her way to the Dépôt. It is the same if he has lost a limb, or is deformed; some arrangement is always made by which a good education is secured for him, and such technical training as fits him to earn at least the wherewithal to pay for board and lodging.

The "problematische" children, they whom the law classes as demoralised or criminal, are under

observation day and night while at the *Depôt* ; and a careful study is made of them with a view to finding out how far their depravity is due to their past circumstances. If their expert observers decide that they have no innate evil propensities, they are boarded-out in country districts with foster-parents who can be trusted to treat them kindly, while keeping a sharp watch on them. They go to the ordinary *Volkschule*, where they are, although neither they nor their companions know it, under the close surveillance of the teachers. A *Depôt* Inspector visits them frequently ; and, at the first sign of backsliding on their part, transfers them to one of the Reformatories the Orphans' Board has organised for such of its children as seem to turn from good to evil by instinct.

The Orphans' Board certainly does its work well : all that it can do it tries to do to keep its charges from harm, and fit them to fight their own battles. And in the overwhelming majority of cases it succeeds : a finer set of children, mentally and physically, than the orphans of Berlin, it would be hard to find, or a set with a better chance of developing into useful citizens. There is no touch of the pauper about them ; on the contrary, they take their places side by side with their fellows on terms of perfect equality, when the time comes for them to go out into the world ; and it is an almost unheard-of thing for one of them to be found later in life in a workhouse.

Then not only does the Board do its work well, but it does it most economically ; it is a perfect adept, indeed, in the art of making one penny do

the work of two. In addition to the multitude of young apprentices and servant maids over whom it keeps watch, it had in the year 1905-6 under its care 7,292 boys and girls. Yet its full expenditure was only £80,652, and of this sum £12,814 was refunded to it, partly by the relatives of its charges, and partly by the State, which pays half the expenses of the criminal children. Thus the cost to the town of its orphans was only £67,838. If London could obtain as good a return for the money it spends on its destitute children as Berlin obtains for this £67,838, it would be able, I am inclined to think, to reduce this branch of its expenditure by two-thirds, and yet provide for its little *protégés* better than it provides for them now.

If the whole relief administration worked as well as this Orphans' Board, Berlin would be a model for all Europe, so far as its treatment of the poor is concerned; but this, unfortunately, is by no means the case, as the results prove. For, strangely enough, in this town where the youthful section of the destitute are dealt with both so wisely and so generously, another section of them, so far as I can judge, are dealt with unwisely, and another again, ungenerously. The blame for this state of things does not, however, rest on the Workhouse and Refuge Board; it does its work both economically and well.

Berlin has only one workhouse, and with this the Poor Law authorities have nothing to do, as it is in reality a prison. Its inmates are not sent there by the Armendirektion, but are taken there by the police; and they must stay there from six months to two

years, as the judge who condemns them may decide. Any man found wandering about without visible means of support may be sent to the workhouse ; and so may any man found begging, or allowing those dependent on him to beg, if during the previous two years he has been convicted of the same offence more than once. This punishment is also meted out to men who, owing to laziness, drunkenness, or gambling, instead of maintaining their families, leave them to be maintained by the authorities ; or who, being without work, refuse to do the work given them by the authorities ; or who, within a given time of their arrival in Berlin, fail to provide themselves with shelter. It is meted out too, in certain circumstances, to disreputable women.

In the course of the year 1905-6, 1,710 men and 178 women were sent to the Berlin workhouse—823 for begging and 854 for vagrancy. 1,375 out of the 1,888 had previously been in prison ; and 1,203 in the workhouse—533 of these latter, indeed, had not been out of the workhouse a year when they returned. This is a fairly strong proof that as a reformatory the place is a failure, a fact, however, that does not prevent its being an extremely useful institution. A worse-looking gang than the men at Rummelsburg I have rarely seen—even the better among them have sturdy beggar stamped on their faces. The workhouse is, therefore, well worth far more than it costs, if for nothing but that it provides a place where men can be kept from preying on their fellows and forced to work. And it does not cost much, only 9d. per

head a day, administration and everything else included.

Although the workhouse itself is under the management of the police, the hospice that is attached to it is under the management of the Poor Law authorities, and is paid for out of the Poor Fund. In the hospice some 600 decrepit old men and women, belonging for the most part to the disreputable class, are housed. This, too, is a useful institution, in that it keeps together all in one place persons who, wherever they are, demoralise and degrade those around them.

The Armendirektion, in dealing with vagrants, distinguishes between work-seekers and work-shirkers; the latter it regards as criminals to be punished, the former as persons to be helped. The refuge it has organised for the benefit of the genuine work-seeker is a casual ward worked on philanthropic lines. Any respectable man may, if destitute, go there for five days, and be provided every day with a bed, breakfast and supper if he devotes his time to seeking work. If he shows a lack of zeal in his search, however, if instead of going where the Labour Bureau tells him there is most chance of work being found, he loiters about in the streets, he is handed over to the police; and the same fate befalls him if he presents himself at the Refuge a second time within three months. Part of the Refuge is reserved as a home for married men, who may leave their wives and children there while they themselves go off in search of work. Each family has a separate room, and there is a school attached to the block; as the Board would shudder at the thought of allowing

children to go untaught even for a day. 776 families stayed in the Refuge Home in the year 1905-6, and no fewer than 581,680 men and women in the Refuge itself.

Whereas the Orphans' Board and the Workhouse and Refuge Board have each clearly defined duties to fulfil, and actually do the work for which they are responsible, the General Board, which is popularly known as the Armendirektion, fulfils so many duties that it is almost impossible to define them; and what is still more trying, does its work through others for the most part. On this Board rests the responsibility for the administration of out-relief, although it is the Poor Commissioners who administer the relief; and one of its chief functions is to supervise and control the Commissioners in their work. Not only does it provide them with money to distribute among the poor, but with soup tickets, fuel, clothes and even potato fields, *i.e.*, allotments, to let out gratis. Through a Council of Doctors it controls the sick-relief administration, and through two deputations and a curatorium, manages five hospitals and colonies for epileptics, lunatics and the feeble-minded. If a man in Berlin is too ill to be properly treated in his own home, he is transported forthwith to one of the town's hospitals, if there is a vacant bed; if not, to a private hospital where the Armendirektion pays for him. If it is a case covered by one of the Insurance Laws, it recovers what it has spent from the Insurance Bureau; otherwise it tries to recover it, by small weekly instalments, from the man himself or his responsible relatives. Nor is it only the cost of sick

relief that it tries to recover. Every year it saves Berlin thousands of pounds by hunting up the responsible relatives of those who receive relief—brothers and sisters, as well as parents and children—and forcing them to contribute to its cost.

Then the Direktion manages a sort of pawnbroking business for the benefit of the respectable poor : it lends them money, and even makes them presents out of its charity fund, but only if they have had no pauper relief for at least two years. It also advances the money wherewith to pay a month's rent sometimes to families leaving the Refuge ; and it not only gives away clothes, but lends out cooking utensils and furniture. There is no limit, indeed, to its functions ; for its business is to help the poor, and the ways of helping the poor are as the sands on the seashore. And it does its work admirably on the whole, that part of it at least in which it acts as administrator. Where it fails is when it acts as controller of the administration of others ; and this being the case it may fairly claim, perhaps, that the fault lies with these others. Be this as it may, the one section of the relief system which does not yield satisfactory results is the out-relief section, which is worked by the Poor Commissioners under the supervision of the Direktion.

There are no fewer than 382 Poor Commissions in Berlin, each consisting of from 6 to 20 appointed members, and certain ex-officio members, viz., the District Municipal Councillors, Municipal Overseer, Medical Officer and clergyman, and the Chairman of the Local Anti-Pauperisation Society. Until quite

recently all the Commissioners were men, and even now, out of 4,380 only 41 are women. There was quite a battle royal when, about 10 years ago, the Municipal Council, acting on the advice of the Armendirektion, proposed appointing women Commissioners. The men Commissioners promptly rose up in their wrath and swore solemnly that, if one woman were appointed, they would resign *en masse*. So high, indeed, did feeling run that the Armen-direktion retired temporarily from the contest.

I was in Berlin at the time and inquired of one of the Commissioners why he and his colleagues objected so strongly to the proposed innovation. "Is it not bad enough to be forced to act as a Commissioner at all, without being forced to act with women?" he replied, indignantly. It was only his own country-women with whom he objected to acting, he hastened to explain; but "Sie kennen unsere Deutschen Frauen nicht," he added, in a tone that implied it was well for me I did not.

The members of each Commission are required to elect a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman. If, however, they cannot induce any one to act as Chairman—and this sometimes happens—the Direktion steps in and appoints one. The office of Chairman is not an enviable one; whoever accepts it must be prepared to devote nearly two hours a day to his work, and to face much worry. He, as the representative of the Commission, which meets only once a month, has all the poor in the district under his care. At a fixed hour every day he must be at his Bureau, as all applications for relief must be made to him person-

ally. If he grants relief, he must prove to his colleagues later that it was needed ; if he refuses to grant it, he must justify his refusal to the Armen-direktion, as every applicant to whom relief is refused has a right of appeal to the Direktion. If a case of destitution is reported to him he must, at once, either go himself or send one of his colleagues to investigate it ; and if help is needed, he must provide it. If what he provides costs more than 6s. he must obtain the sanction of one of his colleagues before he gives it ; and he can grant no permanent relief without the sanction of the whole Commission.

As a rule the Chairman does not himself investigate cases of distress, but deposes his colleagues to investigate them for him. It is his colleagues, too, who watch over the recipients of relief to see that they lead orderly lives, and do not waste what is given them. Out-relief is supposed to be given only to the fairly respectable, and the Armendirektion sends round from time to time a Paupers' Black List, *i.e.*, a list of the persons who are unworthy of help. If a Black Lister applies for relief he may be handed over to the police. Special Commissioners are told off to watch over the paupers who have children, to see that they bring them up properly and send them regularly to school. Parents who fail in their duty in this respect speedily forfeit their relief.

Even for the work done by his colleagues the Chairman of the Commission is responsible, as he must see that it is done. He cannot absent himself from his office, even for a day, without arranging with the Vice-Chairman to be there in his place ; as

otherwise, if things go wrong, any expense entailed by setting them right would fall on him. Then it is one of his duties to keep down the cost of relief in his district by persuading those who live there to subscribe to charities ; and he is expected to act in co-operation with the local philanthropic societies, especially with the Anti-Pauperisation Society. And all this he has to do gratis, besides keeping the Commission's accounts and writing the diaries of the persons it supports. The rent of his office is paid for him, it is true ; what account books he needs are given to him ; and a policeman is placed at his service to deliver for him his official notices, etc. ; but any other expense he may incur he must defray out of his own pocket.

I was in a Chairman's office one day when he was receiving applicants for relief. The first to arrive was a middle-aged man, evidently one of the feckless tribe, who came in leading a child by the hand. He had, of course, a pitiable tale to tell : wages were lower than ever before, and rents were higher, while as for food !—at this point tears came into his eyes. The end of it was that the Chairman, who seemed to know the man well, promised to ask the Commission to place him on the permanent list for 3s. or 4s. a month. He looked at me in surprise when I told him later that in London such a man would not receive a penny. "But what can the poor fellow do?" he asked. "He has four children and no wife, he must have a little help."

The next arrival was a decrepit, miserable-looking old creature, who was already on the permanent list.

She came in search of a Dispensary Letter and it was given to her at once. After her there came a woman concerning whom inquiries had to be made ; then another woman, one about forty, who begged hard for a little help, and certainly looked as if she needed it. It was denied to her, however, and when I inquired why, I was told that it was because she had only one child and it was illegitimate.

Another day I accompanied the same Chairman when he went to pay the permanent-list paupers their allowances. We found about 150 men, women and children waiting for us ; and a motley crowd they were. One half of them, I feel sure, would have received no relief at all in England ; while of the rest the majority would have been packed off straight to the workhouse. The blind, the halt, the maimed, were there of course ; lazy ne'er-do-wells of every type mingled with the unfortunate ; decent old folk, standing side by side with folk whom it would be straining charity to dub "shady." And in the midst of them all were children there in the place of their parents. Some of the old men and women were quite pitiable objects ; they seemed half-starved and most wretched and neglected. Little wonder either ; for the town, beyond granting them out-relief, does nothing for them at all, just leaving them to fend for themselves, and that always spells misery. In Berlin there are no refuges to which the poor have the right to betake themselves when too old to work. What old-age homes there are are reserved practically for the afflicted, excepting the one that is reserved for the disreputable ; and even

were it otherwise, there is not room in them for a tithe of those who ought to be there. Fortunately in this there will soon be a change for the better, as the town is now building for itself a large old-age home in which 1,500 inmates can be housed.

Alike from the humanitarian and the economic point of view, the administration of out-relief in Berlin is far from satisfactory; at least, so it seemed to me when I was there; and if the blame for this rests on the Poor Commissioners, it rests also, and in a still greater degree, on the system. The Chairmen of these Commissions are expected to do more than the average honorary official can, or will, do; and the result is that much of the sifting and sorting of the poverty-stricken is done only in a perfunctory fashion. Besides, the Commissions themselves have great difficulties to contend against, it must be remembered, not only because there is for the time being practically nowhere where the more respectable of their old pensioners, who are alone in the world, can be sent; but also because there is nowhere where the average applicant for relief can be put to the test, as it were. Every year out-relief is granted to hundreds of men and women for no other reason than that they have children, and that there is no institution to which they, together with their children, can be sent for longer than a fortnight.

During the year 1905-6 there were on an average 33,944 men and women, together with 11,341 children, on the permanent out-relief list, in addition to the host in the receipt of temporary relief. No fewer than 2·5 per cent. indeed of the whole population of

Berlin, which in December, 1905, amounted only to 2,040,148, were in the receipt of out-relief either permanently or temporarily. The permanent allowances for adults ranged in amount from 9d. a week to 7s. 6d.; and for children, from 9d. to 6s. 3d. The full cost of out-relief and its administration amounted that year to £546,521. Still, although out-relief is undoubtedly administered on wasteful lines, relief as a whole is administered very economically. The full expenditure on the poor in 1905-6, including the expenditure on the Orphans' Depôt, the Refuge, the Workhouse Hospice, the colonies, hospitals, etc., was only £1,199,405; and the Armendirektion succeeded in recovering £219,612 of the money it spent. Thus the cost to the town of its poor was £979,793—that is, 9s. 7½d. per head of the population, or 6s. 10¾d. less than in London.

It must not be forgotten, however, that throughout Germany there is in force an Old-Age Pension Law, as well as an Invalidity Law; but if these laws were passed with a view to reducing either the number of paupers, or the expense they entail, in Berlin, they have failed signally. In 1889, the year they came into force, there were 18,668 men and women on the permanent-relief list. By 1899 the number had increased to 27,771; and by 1906, as we have seen, to 33,944. Meanwhile the population had increased from 1,315,412 to 2,040,148. In 1885 the expenditure on poor relief was £405,000; by 1899 it had risen to £718,679; and by 1905-6 to £979,793. The truth of the matter is the Old-Age Pension Law is practically a dead letter in Berlin; for no one

can claim a pension until he is 70; and although the exact number of working men who live to be 70 is a moot point, we know that it must be very small, seeing that only 1·3 per cent. of the whole male population, rich and poor alike, reach that age. At the end of 1904 there were only 2,530 old-age pensioners, male and female, in the town. As for the Invalidity Allowances, they are so small that in the great majority of cases they have to be supplemented by pauper relief. This is the case also with the old-age pensions.

So far as the young are concerned, Berlin has good reason to be proud of its poor-relief administration, for in no other city are destitute children quite so well cared for all round; not even in Budapest, for the time being, although in a few years it may be otherwise. So far as the diseased are concerned, too, it has good reason to be proud of it, for the poor who are ill are cared for there certainly more promptly than elsewhere, if not more humanely. Then the town may fairly claim that if its administrators have failed to devise an ideal system of dealing with vagrants and loafers, they have at least succeeded in devising one that is better—less costly and more just—than the system in force in London. The really worthless among its paupers are at any rate kept on short commons and forced to work. There are many useful lessons in poor-relief administration to be learnt at the Rummelsburg workhouse, as well as at the colonies for epileptics, etc., and the Orphans' Dépôt.

On the other hand, Berlin cannot plume itself on

the way in which its feckless poor are treated ; and among the poor the feckless are always in the majority. The fashion in which its Commissioners lavish doles around is a source of wholesale demoralisation : it pauperises irredeemably men and women alike. As for the way in which the more worthy of its aged poor are treated, that ought to be a subject of heart-searching to the city, for they are certainly neglected most woefully. Nowhere, surely, is the worn-out worker made to realise quite so painfully as in Berlin, that he is a mere cumberer of the ground, a burden on his fellows.¹

¹ Dr. Münsterberg, the President of the Berlin Armendirektion, published in the *Contemporary Review* for November, 1905, a detailed criticism of this article. In it he was kind enough to note with satisfaction that I had "been very successful" in my endeavour to acquire an intimate knowledge of the conditions that prevail in Berlin. Everything in my paper "about the management of municipal affairs, and especially about the administration of Poor Relief, was entirely correct," he remarked. "The nature and form of the relief were likewise correctly described." He frankly admitted, in fact, that upon all points but one, every statement I made was accurate. The subject on which, according to him, I went wilfully astray was, of course, the treatment of the aged poor. Dr. Münsterberg is evidently firmly convinced that the old men and women whom Berlin supports are on the whole well cared for. I wish I could agree with him ; but, unfortunately, I cannot.

I know Berlin well : I have spent months there again and again studying carefully the condition of the poor, especially the aged poor. I was writing, therefore, of what I had seen with my own eyes, and heard with my own ears, when I made the statements against which Dr. Münsterberg protests indignantly, viz., that "the way in which the more worthy of its aged poor are treated ought to be the subject of heart-searching to the city . . . and that the fashion in which its Commissioners lavish doles around . . . pauperises irredeemably men and women alike." I certainly found many signs of great misery among the poor of Berlin ; and the mere fact that in this town with its population of barely two millions there should be 33,944 men and women on its permanent out-relief list, and 2·5 per cent. of its whole people in the receipt of out-relief permanently or temporarily, is in itself proof, surely, that the dole-giving that goes on there tends to pauperise.

THE BELGIAN BEGGARS' COLONIES

I ONCE paid a visit to the Belgian Beggars' Colonies—I am the only woman, I believe, ever admitted. And terrible places they are: in no prison that I have ever entered did the average inmate strike me as being so entirely and hopelessly demoralised.

There are three of these colonies for men within walking distance of one another—Hoogstraeten, Wortel, and Merxplas; and two of them, Hoogstraeten and Wortel, are worked together. In theory each colony is reserved for a special class of colonist. Any man in Belgium guilty of vagrancy or begging may be sent to a colony. If he is fairly respectable he ought to be sent to Hoogstraeten, providing he has not been there more than once before. Then, if he is old or feeble, he is kept there for a year; while if he is able-bodied, he is sent to Wortel. Merxplas is supposed to be reserved exclusively for men belonging to the worthless class, and they may be kept there for seven years. Unfortunately, it is only in theory that this classification exists, as everything depends on the magistrate before whom the beggar is brought. Some magistrates send all beggars to Merxplas, others send them all to Hoogstraeten. Thus, it sometimes happens, that a man who has just

quitted Merxplas, is sent to Hoogstraeten ; or that a lad who is out of a job, is packed off to Merxplas.

I found at Merxplas a poor old man who, after supporting himself until he was nearly seventy, had been sent there for no other reason than that the Little Sisters of the Poor had asked for a grant towards his keep. And sitting quite near him, was a man who had been in prison twenty-seven times. So far as I could judge, the men at Merxplas were not one whit worse than those at Hoogstraeten ; the men in the Merxplas prison cells, indeed, seemed much better, and the Director admitted that they really were better. According to him, it is always the more respectable of the inmates who are in the cells, as it is they who find life most intolerable in the colony ; and therefore try to run away. A fair number of them succeed, for hardly a day passes but escapes are made.

These colonies are huge institutions. At Merxplas alone, the day I was there, there were 4,963 inmates. In each of the Merxplas dining-halls there are 1,000 seats ; in each of the Wortel dormitories, 500 beds. The buildings are fine, and have evidently been carefully planned ; while the Merxplas workshops are quite models. I know of no other institution where so many industries are carried on, and under such favourable conditions. And that although the majority of the inmates work on the land. So far as the internal arrangements of the colonies are concerned, the organisation is certainly good, and so is the management. Although the discipline in force is less severe than in the Austrian penal workhouses, the

men conduct themselves well, as a rule, and do the work given them to do. None the less, when I asked one of the resident chaplains if he thought the colonies a success, he answered emphatically, "No. If the object of the institution is to keep these men out of sight, then it is a success," he declared; "but if it is to reform them, it is a complete failure. If a decent man comes here—and decent men do come here sometimes—he is a rogue when he leaves."

In the opinion of this chaplain, and he could of course speak on the subject with authority, every man who goes to one of these colonies is ruined in every way. For one thing, it is practically impossible, he maintains, for any one to pass his days and nights shut up with the sort of company there is there, and not be demoralised. And for another, even if he is not demoralised, as the world is sure that he is, he has lost his chance of ever earning an honest living; for no master will employ him, as other workmen will not work with him. There is a committee, the members of which try to provide work for these people, when they leave the colony; and during the three years that preceded my visit they had succeeded in doing so only in three cases. Thus, when a man has once been to a colony—and 44 per cent. of those who go are under 27—he has no alternative but to return there again and again.

When I asked the Wortel Director what he thought of the colony system, he frankly admitted that in Belgium it was a failure; and even the Merxplas Director confessed it was not the suc-

cess it ought to be. This is due, however, he holds, to defects in arrangement which might easily be removed. According to him, these colonies are much too large: with nearly five thousand men at Merxplas alone, there can be no question of treating them individually, or bringing personal influence to bear on them. Yet it is only by treating them individually, and bringing personal influence to bear on them, that there is even a chance of reforming them. Then the inmates ought to be carefully classified; the more respectable of them, especially such of them as are there for the first time, ought to be kept apart from the rest; and, above all, it should not be left for a single magistrate to decide whether a man shall be sent to Merxplas, or to Hoogstraeten. Were these changes made Beggars' Colonies would be most useful institutions, this Director is convinced. And that he is right I have no doubt whatever. Still, as things are, these special Beggars' Colonies are certainly a failure, alike from the social reformer's standpoint and from the ratepayers'. For they who go there are worse when they leave than when they go; and one meets with more beggars in Brussels than in London.

POOR RELIEF IN THE BALKANS

NATIONS that live in the Balkans have one great advantage over nations that live elsewhere: whenever it is a case of "Tekel," either with their institutions or themselves, they have always the Turk at hand to bear the blame. "Yes, that is the result of Turkish rule," they promptly declare, at the first sign of disapproval they detect, no matter in whom or of what. "Now you see for yourself what a curse it was, and how we suffer from it even to-day."

I once found, in a Balkan town, an almshouse in a most deplorable condition: the building was dilapidated and quite lost in dirt, while the poor old inmates were neglected and miserable—they looked as if they had not been washed for months. Never did I see such a dinner, not even in the worst of prisons, as that which, when I arrived, those luckless old folk were eating. So bad was it in every way that no self-respecting dog would have touched it. And this iniquitous state of things was due entirely, I was gravely assured, to the tyranny and cruel exactions of the Turks! One might have thought, indeed, from the tone in which those concerned in the matter spoke, that the Turks had been in the town that very morning—as a point of fact they had

not been there for many a long year—and that it was they who ought to have cleaned the house and washed its inmates, and who actually had cooked that execrable dinner.

There is one Balkan nation, however, who stoutly refuse to avail themselves of their chance of using the Turk as their scapegoat: Montenegrins would never dream of admitting that the Sultan's subjects were ever in their land long enough to do any damage beyond that entailed by killing, plundering and burning. For whatever is wrong among them, they themselves accept the full responsibility, not being of the sort to cast their own burdens on other men's backs. That this is true of them individually as well as nationally their poor-relief records prove. If ever there were a people after the Charity Organisation Society's own heart, it is certainly the Montenegrins. Were the Society to send among them the very wariest of its lynx-eyed investigators, I doubt whether he would find a single case in which relief had ever been asked for, much less had ever been granted, before it was really needed. On the other hand he would undoubtedly come across both men and women who, solely for dignity's sake, had refused it when it was offered, although they needed it very sorely.

"What do we do for the poor? But we are all poor alike here," a Cetinje official exclaimed, when I applied to him for information concerning the Montenegrin poor-relief system. He spoke advisedly and without exaggeration. Practically all Montenegrins are poor; and the great majority of them are

very poor, so poor, indeed, that the marvel is they do not die of sheer starvation. There are Government officials among them whose salaries are only 10d. a day; and they who in the Principality receive more than 10s. a day, could be counted on one man's fingers. As for the peasants, there are hundreds and hundreds of them whose earnings, in the course of a year, do not amount to more than £8 each. On this sum, eked out by the yield of a little patch of land—the fraction of an acre, perhaps—many a family has to be provided with food and clothing. None the less I never saw a hungry-looking child in Montenegro, I never found a child in a Montenegrin school who had been sent there breakfastless. This is a notable fact; for, even in the richest of lands, one sometimes meets with boys and girls whose faces show that their rations are of the scantiest. And what renders this fact the more notable still, from the sociologist's point of view as well as the economist's, is that there is practically no poor relief in Montenegro, although there is a properly organised poor-relief system, one founded, too, on the old Montenegrin saying: "Whoever asks must receive, be he peasant or prince."

In Cetinje, the capital of Montenegro, the full cost of the poor relief granted in 1905—the cost of the administration of the relief as well as the relief itself—was £250; while in Podgoritza, a town with 10,000 inhabitants, it was only £270. And in the one case as in the other, by far the greater part of the money went in sick relief. What the cost of it is in the country as a whole, there

are no exact statistics to show ; but, judging by the result of inquiries I made, it cannot certainly be more than £2,000 a year, for there are districts in which it is nil. Thus, as the population is some 245,000, the expenditure on poor relief is under 2d. per head a year, that is, is less than in any other land that has an organised relief system. And this is not because the authorities there grant relief grudgingly ; on the contrary, I know nowhere where it is granted so ungrudgingly ; but solely because the poor themselves would rather go half starved than accept it, so strong is the feeling among them that it is unseemly, nay disgraceful, to eat the bread of the commune, that is bread for which not they themselves, but others have worked.

There is one case, however, in which the Montenegrin poor accept the help of their neighbours without scruple and right gladly. If a fire occurs in a village, it is the custom for the commune not only to rebuild any cottage burnt, but also to re-furnish it. Whatever there was in the way of goods and chattels, including even crockery and saucepans, in the old cottage, at the time of the fire, must be provided at public expense for the new cottage, as soon as it is built. This tradition ordains, and no Montenegrin would ever think of setting tradition at defiance. Even the proudest and most susceptible among them feels no humiliation in taking possession of his new home, although he owes it to others ; for he looks upon it as something that is his due, something to which he has a right, and which he can therefore justly claim. Help given in these

circumstances is of course not counted as poor relief.

According to Montenegrin law each commune, whether urban or rural, is responsible for its own poor; and must provide for them at its own cost, unless they be under 14, in which case the State defrays the expense they entail. In towns the Poor Law authorities are the Burgomaster and the members of the Municipal Council; and in villages, the President of the Communal Council, the priest and the schoolmaster. The administration of poor relief is entirely in the hands of these authorities, who, however, are responsible for the way in which they do their work to their respective communes, on the one hand, and the Minister of the Interior, on the other. It is to them that all applications for relief must be made, and all cases of distress must be reported; and it is their duty not only to relieve destitution but to try to prevent the needy from becoming destitute. The sick are under their special care: they must provide them with medical attendance and medicine gratis; must provide them also with proper food and some one to nurse them. They may, it is true, send them to the hospital which the State provides; but only in cases in which the doctor decides that it would be better for the patients themselves to be there than in their own homes. Even when in hospital, the poor are still under their guardianship; they must pay for them at the rate of 10d. a day each; they must visit them, too, from time to time; and must see that those dependent on them, if such there be, are provided for. And woe

betide them if they do not do what they ought to do; for the invalid poor are not only under their protection, but under that of the whole community; and the community in Montenegro keep a sharp watch over officials whether honorary or paid. Poor Law authorities who were harsh, or even neglectful, in their dealings with the poor, would speedily have their lives made a burden to them.

One of the peculiarities of the Montenegrin relief system is that in the whole country there is not a single Poor Law institution, not a workhouse, not an almshouse, not even an orphanage. There is, it is true, a lunatic asylum, but it is as much for the rich as for the poor. The hospitals, too, which are supported by the State, are for the use of all classes. Thus as there are no institutions in which to lodge them, boarding-out is necessarily the order of the day for the more helpless of the poor of all degrees. Not only are the children boarded-out, but also the aged and the infirm, unless they be strong enough to live alone and fend for themselves, in which case they receive a money allowance of about 3s. 4d. a week each. This is the arrangement in force throughout the land, so far as there can be said to be any arrangement where they who are willing either to be boarded-out, or to accept allowances, are so very few and far between.

If a child is left destitute, the Poor Law authorities take possession of him—or of her—at once, and hand him over to the care of suitable foster-parents, with strict injunctions to bring him up properly, feed him well, and see that he goes to school. In theory he

remains boarded-out until he is 14, when he is supposed to begin to earn his own living. Theory is one thing, however, and practice another, in Montenegro as elsewhere ; and as a point of fact, for a healthy child to remain longer than a few weeks in the keeping of the authorities, is something almost unheard of. It very rarely happens, indeed, that he ever comes into their keeping at all, unless he be a foundling ; as some distant connection or other is sure to claim him, if he has no nearer relative. For quite apart from their horror of allowing their kith and kin to accept relief, Montenegrins, even when poor, are always eager to increase their family circle, as the larger it is in the greater honour are they held. As for the foundlings, they are almost invariably adopted, providing they be sound in body and mind, and old enough to show it. In one district, when I asked the Poor Law authorities how much they must pay a foster-mother for taking care of a child, they were very much amused. "There is no question here of paying foster-mothers," one of them assured me. "No sooner is it known that we have a child without 'belongings' on our hands, than a free fight begins as to who shall have the chance of adopting him."

The old folk, when destitute, are not in such great request as the young, it must be admitted : no fighting is necessary in order to obtain possession of them. Still, even for them it very rarely happens that the commune is called upon to provide maintenance. For family feeling is strong in that part of the world ; and a man considers himself every whit as much

bound to support his father and mother, nay, his grand-, and even great-grand-, father and mother, as to support his own child. So long as he has a home he looks upon it as their home as much as his own ; and whatever he may have in the way of food and clothing he shares with them, not as a matter of charity, but as one of simple right. It is no unusual thing to find four generations living in the same cottage on the yield of the labour of one man ; and, as a rule, it is not the bread-winner but his grandfather, the helpless bread-eater, who considers himself its master, and plays the host. If old persons have no children to provide for them when too feeble to provide for themselves, relatives, connections or friends generally come forward and offer them a refuge in which to pass their last days, even if they can offer them nothing beyond, excepting, perhaps, a crust of bread.

When I was in Cetinje, a poor-relief allowance was granted to a poverty-stricken old man, whose only son had just died ; and who was, so far as he knew, quite alone in the world. Within a week, a peasant from some remote district came tearing up to the town in a state of great indignation and distress. The old man was a relation of his, he declared, and no relation of his should live on communal money. And although he himself was almost as poor as poor could be, he insisted on carrying him off to his own home and installing him there as a permanent inmate. At that time there was only one other old man in the receipt of a poor-relief allowance in all Cetinje, and not a single old woman.

There never had been, I was told, more than five old men together, at any one time, in the receipt of these allowances.

Owing to an accident I was once driven to ask the mistress of a prettily-furnished, nicely-kept Montenegrin house to take me in for the night. Without a moment's hesitation she consented, most kindly and courteously; but she frankly confessed, when I told her I was hungry, that she could not give me anything to eat, as she had nothing whatever in the house, not even a slice of bread. This woman was, I found, carrying on a hand-to-hand struggle against starvation; for it was very little she could earn, and out of that little she was trying to maintain not only herself, but her mother and two other relatives. Although for weeks together she hardly knew what it was to have enough to eat, nothing would induce her to ask for help; and she even refused to sell her furniture, lest her neighbours should divine how poor she was, and, of their charity, offer her food.

To go hungry all day for the sake of being able to hold one's head high may seem absurd, of course; none the less they who do so are of the stuff of which heroes are made, and have in them the spirit that marks the great. Of all the countries that I have ever visited, Montenegro is the only one where I never found a single pauper, in the modern meaning of the term, never found a man who, as a matter of taste, would rather accept poor relief than work for his own daily bread. In this matter, at any rate, if ever a nation had the right to claim to be the salt of the earth, it is surely the Montenegrin.

In Servia a very different spirit prevails among the poor from that which prevails in Montenegro: in Belgrade not only is all that is offered in the way of relief accepted gladly, but the tendency is to clamour for more. Although as a nation the Serbs are much richer than the Montenegrins, individually there is great poverty among them, owing in a measure at least to the troublous days through which they are passing. For years now the country has been politically in a state of unrest, with the result that its economic development has been checked, and its trade has been at a standstill. There has been so little productive work to do that a large section of the population have almost ceased to know what it is to have regular employment, a most demoralising state of things, of course. I know no other country where so many loafers are to be met with as in Servia, and no other country where so many children go about with hungry faces. In some of the schools it is quite pitiable to see the number of poor little creatures there are to whom food for their minds is being given, when what they really need is, evidently, food for their bodies.

In Servia, as in most countries, it is the Municipality in towns, and the Communal Council in rural districts, that is responsible for the poor. They are the Poor Law authorities; and it is, in theory, part of their regular business to relieve the destitute and ward off from them starvation. And this they would no doubt do gladly, if they could; but they cannot, as they have not the means wherewith to do it. With the best will in the world, even the ablest of ad-

ministrators cannot relieve distress without money ; and Municipalities and Communal Councils alike are in Servia almost as often as not practically penniless. Belgrade, which has a population of some 70,000, spent, it is true, on poor relief, in 1905, £5,600 ; and on providing the poor with doctors, £6,400 more. Had it spent five times as much, however, nay, perhaps even ten, there would still have been men, women and children in the city without bread, so great is the poverty there. As there is not money enough to provide regular allowances for those who need them, dole-giving, with all its attendant evils, is resorted to ; and even with the doles there are far too few to go round. It is a case of first come first served, of course ; and there, as elsewhere, it is not the first comers, as a rule, who are the most deserving. Before the respectable poor can make up their minds to apply for relief, there is more often than not no relief to be had, the clamorous having already obtained it all. Besides, even those who do obtain it cannot possibly live on what is given them ; they must either eke it out by begging or starve. Belgrade, it is true, provides an old-age home for such of its destitute citizens as are too old or feeble to beg ; but it is not the sort of place to which even the hopelessly destitute resort gladly ; and there is room there only for some sixty inmates, while there are thousands of poor old folk in the city who are penniless. Among the aged poor there is certainly great suffering : life is for them one long struggle against starvation, a struggle in which the chances are, as they know, they will be worsted. Hard as

their lot undoubtedly is, however, it would be still harder were it not that the Serbs, as all Slavs, are both kindly and charitable; and whoever has gives with a generous hand.

The able-bodied poor are not counted as poor in Servia, but as criminals; and are treated accordingly, unless, indeed, they are discreet enough to demean themselves in such a way that the authorities are able to ignore them and their poverty. In Belgrade they are not interfered with at all so long as they content themselves with begging; it is only when they wax clamorous and insist on being fed, that the police enter the lists against them. Then they are either driven forth from the city or sent to prison, where precisely the same treatment is meted out to them as to the other inmates, a fair percentage of whom are always murderers. There were 1,872 prisoners in one of the Belgrade gaols the day I was there; and of these, 592 had actually committed murders; and 33 more had attempted to commit murders and failed through no fault of their own.

In theory, destitute children belonging to Belgrade are boarded-out until they are seven, when they are sent to orphanages, where they remain until they are old enough to earn their own living. In practice, however, it must be admitted, they fare by no means so well; as, owing to the lack of orphanages to which to send them, they are, as a rule, at the mercy of chance ever after they are seven. Sometimes their foster-parents keep them after that age, although if they do, it is gratis; sometimes charitable societies take possession of them, and try to do for

them what the authorities ought to do ; while sometimes private persons in their kindness give them food and shelter, although they rarely adopt them. Almost as often as not, however, they are left practically to their own devices, at an age when, in other countries, they would be regarded and treated as infants ; and the result is disastrous, of course, both for them and for the nation. There are, it is calculated, nearly 100,000 vagabond children in Servia, little castaways who are alone in the world, with no one to care for them, no one to feed them or clothe them, no one to put them in the right way. One hundred thousand waifs and strays in a country with a population of only some two and a half millions ! And there would undoubtedly be many more than there are were it not for Dr. Petrovitch, Servia's Barnardo, and his Boys' Home.

This home is of somewhat special interest to us as a nation, as practically it owes its existence to two of our fellow-countrymen, of whom we are all proud, and with good reason. During the Servian war of independence, an English committee was formed for the purpose of taking care of the wounded ; and of this the most active members were the late Sir William White, General Gordon and Dr. Petrovitch. When the war was over and there were no more wounded to tend, Sir William White proposed that the committee should turn their hands to other work, and try to do something for those whom the dead had left behind them destitute. It was far worse to be hungry than to be wounded, he declared ; and so successfully did he and his two colleagues plead the

cause of the orphans of those who had fallen in battle, that an English home was opened for their benefit. There many young lives were saved and many children were put in the way of earning an honest livelihood. Unfortunately, as time passed, and Russian influence became supreme in Belgrade, the orphanage had to be closed for political reasons. Thereupon Dr. Petrovitch, who was keenly alive to the danger, even from the national standpoint, of allowing the good work it was doing to lapse, organised in its place his Boys' Home.

At the present time this home is by far the most important philanthropic institution in Servia. The Doctor, who is still its director, works it on lines that are as original as they have proved to be successful. If a little vagrant presents himself there, he is not only admitted at once, but he is made welcome. He is provided with good clothes in the place of his rags, is given good food, and is surrounded with comforts. Nor is this all: he is never allowed to hear a rough word; no punishment ever befalls him; on the contrary, he is treated with great courtesy as well as great kindness. He is even invited to dine with the director in his private house from time to time, and on these occasions is waited on as an honoured guest. The object of this proceeding is to arouse in him if possible a feeling of self-respect; and at the same time to bring home to him the fact that, in the words of the director, "honesty pays."

Dr. Petrovitch's theory is that boys of this class, having as a rule passed all their lives amidst

degrading associations and in misery, do not know that anything of the nature of happiness or comfort exists in this world: kicks and cuffs and semi-starvation seem to them the natural state of things here below; and they have actually to be taught that it is otherwise. And the only way they can be taught is by rendering them happy and comfortable. When once this is done, and they have been made to realise that their happiness and comfort depend on their working hard and behaving themselves well, they do work hard, and do behave well, he maintains, if for no other reason than that they do not wish to return to their old state of misery. The theory, as a theory, is crude of course; still in practice it certainly answers admirably in Belgrade. During the twenty years the home has been open, thousands of little ragamuffins, who were marching in a bee-line for prison, if not for the gallows, have been transformed, by the training Dr. Petrovitch has given them, into honest men capable of doing useful work in the world.

Bulgaria for the time being has no poor-relief system at all; and she has certainly a good excuse, if ever a nation had, for being without one. From the day she threw off the Turkish yoke and secured the right to manage her own affairs, she has been striving heart and soul to put her house in order. But it is no easy task to put a house in order in which the reckless and thriftless have been living for centuries, especially when one's hands are tied by lack of money; and the wonder is that she should have been able to do so much, not that something

should still remain for her to do. Besides, although poor relief is not yet organised, the Bulgarian Government are keenly alive to the necessity of organising it, and are making preparations accordingly. Already they have officials in Paris, Vienna and Berlin studying the systems in force there for the relief of children ; and they are only waiting for their reports to found a children's department in Sofia. And certainly one is sorely needed ; for, out of the 6,000 boys and girls who attend the Communal schools there, 1,000 are reported as being insufficiently fed. So pitifully hungry, indeed, do some children come to school, that the teachers, out of their own scanty means, provide them with free dinners.

While waiting for the better days that are coming, the destitute in Bulgaria are reduced to living in a somewhat hand-to-mouth fashion, it must be confessed. In Sofia, as in other towns, destitute children are boarded-out by the Municipality until they are seven, when they are handed over to the keeping of some private society or other, which, in return for taking care of them until they are old enough to take care of themselves, receives a subvention. As for the aged poor, they are allowed to live, rent free, in certain houses belonging to the Municipality ; and they are given small monthly allowances with additional grants on high days and holidays. For the destitute, who are neither old nor young, but in what ought to be the prime of life, no provision whatever is made, unless they be ill, when they are admitted to hospitals where everything is done that can be done in the way of skilful treatment and careful

nursing to restore to them health and strength. The full cost of poor relief, apart from sick relief, in Sofia was in 1905 only £1,600.

In rural districts the Communal authorities do for the poor what in town is done by the Municipalities, so far at least as the poor themselves allow it to be done; and that is by no means far. For what paupers there are in Bulgaria are town-bred, even if country-born. The peasants as a race have all the Montenegrins' horror of poor relief, and must be in very sore straits, indeed, before they will accept it. As a rule they cling together and help one another, the strong supporting the feeble; for family feeling is an important factor among them, and a village is often little more than one great family.

In Bosnia, as in Herzegovina, poor relief, oddly enough, has been very carefully organised; and is, in the chief towns at any rate, administered with great skill. The poor relief authorities are the Burgomaster and a Committee of the Municipal Council. In Serajevo, the Burgomaster, who is a Turk, is keenly interested in all that concerns the poor, and devotes himself specially to seeing that the helpless among them are well cared for. The children for whom the town provides are either boarded-out, or are sent as paying guests to the orphanage Archbishop Stadler has founded; while the old people either receive small pensions, or are lodged in the Municipality's Old-Age Home.

This home is a delightful retreat, quite a model of what such a place should be. Although it is in the centre of the town, with windows looking

on to a busy street, it has behind it a large garden with great trees under which the inmates can spend the whole day if they choose. There they receive their visitors, as a rule, although they have well-furnished, comfortable rooms in which to receive them, if they prefer it. These old people are fed, too, as well as they are lodged, the food provided for them being not only good but quite dainty. They have coffee and rolls for breakfast ; soup, meat and vegetables for dinner ; coffee with something to eat in the afternoon ; and soup with vegetables or a pudding for supper. And such of them as smoke receive also tobacco, cigarette paper and matches. Yet thanks to good management, the cost per head is only sixpence a day.

In this home, Mahomedans and Catholics, Orthodox and Jews, all live together on terms of equality, live together, too, in peace, so careful have the authorities been to remove every possible cause of friction, and to teach by the force of example all-round toleration. The Mahomedan women have a taste for yellow shoes, and the Orthodox for red ones ; the Burgomaster therefore provides his *protégées* with yellow shoes and red shoes, as well as black ones, to choose from. Then, as Mahomedan men would be scandalised were their women folk to be allowed to live in rooms into which prying male eyes could peer, the old ladies—the youngest among them will never see sixty again—are lodged in rooms where the windows are covered with lattice work. It is by paying attention to such trifles as these, and insisting that the master and matron shall pay atten-

tion to them too—that they shall interfere as little as possible with those under their care, while humouring their foibles and pet weaknesses—that the Turkish Burgomaster has succeeded in making his old-age home the abode of peace and happiness that it is.

Although Roumania has little in common with the Balkan States, she is too near a neighbour of theirs not to claim mention here, especially as peculiar interest is attached to the poor-relief system in force in her capital, owing to its being the only poor-relief system, so far as I know, ever devised and worked by women.

When, some thirty-eight years ago now, the present Queen of Roumania arrived in Bucharest as a bride, she found the poor there in a pitiable condition: it was only the sharp-witted among them who obtained any help at all, and they simply by playing the importunate widow. For although poverty was rife in the land, and men, women and children were starving, there was no organised relief of any kind, nothing, indeed, for the poor to rely upon but begging. The law ordained, it is true, that the Municipality should provide for the destitute; but unfortunately the Municipality had no money wherewith to provide for them; for Roumania in those days was straining every nerve to prepare for the great fight that was at hand, a fight on which hung her very existence as a nation. So long as she had the Turk at her gate and owed him allegiance, she must, she had no alternative, spend every penny she could raise on her army, let the poor fare as they

might. No one realised this more clearly than Queen Elisabeth. It would be useless, she knew, to apply to the Municipality for help ; equally useless to apply to the Government : the Roumanian Parliament would have scoffed aloud had it been suggested to them that they should devote their time to social legislation. Whatever was done would have to be done by private persons, and would have to be done, as the Queen soon found, by women ; for when men's heads are busy with national problems there is not much chance of their troubling themselves with matters so parochial as poor relief. And with some few notable exceptions, Roumanian women at that time knew no more about administrative work, or indeed any sort of practical work, than canary birds ; and looked upon almsgiving as the one and only method of helping the poor.

Fortunately the Queen herself had been brought up in a very different school from that in which it was then the fashion for Roumanian mothers to bring up their daughters. Even as a child she had been accustomed to going about among the poor ; and had learnt by personal experience to know them and their ways—to know, almost by instinct, how they could best be helped. Fortunately, too, her head is as clear as her heart is tender ; and she does not allow her keen sympathy with suffering to blind her to the fact that almsgiving, more often than not, spells demoralisation. Besides, poetess though she be, she is a practical woman, with a marked talent for business, and something like a genius for organisation ; and as she has always had more people to help than

she has had money wherewith to help them, she has developed a real gift, not only for devising money-raising expedients, but also for making one bani do two banis' work. This gift stood her in good stead when she launched out on her career as poor-relief organiser and administrator; for she had no poor rate or other official source of income to draw upon for her undertaking; no means, indeed, of any sort, excepting what she either provided herself, or persuaded others to provide. So sorely pinched was she for money in those early days that there could be no question of paying salaries: work that in other capitals has always been done by paid officials is, even now, in Bucharest, done gratis by the Boyards' wives and daughters, whom the Queen herself has trained. For, fired by her example, the great ladies of Roumania soon rallied around her, and threw themselves heart and soul into the task of trying to better the lot of the poor.

Not only did Queen Elisabeth organise whatever there is in the way of poor relief in Bucharest, but she still controls its administration: she is, in fact, practically the head of the poor-relief department, a department worked entirely by amateurs. She has founded a large number of private societies, each one of which devotes itself, under her surveillance, to some special branch of relief work. She also encourages others to found similar societies, and takes them, when founded, under her protection. Each society is autonomous: it has its own managing committee and its own vice-president, while the Queen is, as a rule, its president. It works on its

own special lines, and must raise for itself the money it spends. Still, although independent of one another, these societies all act more or less in concert, the Queen forming a connecting link among them. For many years of her life she attended regularly the committee meetings of the more important of them; and even now she is often present, if any subject of special interest is under discussion. Minute reports concerning what the various societies do, and leave undone, are sent to her; and she is always consulted before any change is made either in their organisation or their management. When difficulties arise, especially when money runs short, as it often does, they always turn to her for advice; and the cases are few and far between when she does not devise means of helping them. If her own purse is empty she will, as Mr. Carnegie has learnt by experience, appeal on their behalf to some one whose purse is full; or, if she has the time, she will write a review article, or a poem, and pass on to them the cheque the grateful editor sends her.

Of all the societies the Queen has founded the most interesting is the Regina Elisabeta, which devotes itself specially to administering out relief. It consists of about a hundred members, all ladies, and a large number of assistant members who act under their direction. Each member is responsible to the managing committee of the society for the relief of the poor in some one district. She is the relieving officer of the district, in fact, and is expected to be personally acquainted with the poor who live there. If any of them require relief, it is to

her they apply for it ; and whatever they receive passes through her hands. Excepting in urgent cases, however, she cannot grant relief on her own responsibility, lest her feelings lead her judgment astray to the detriment of the society's funds. She must convince the managing committee that the relief is needed ; and before this can be done one of her colleagues must visit her *protégé* and confirm her report of the case. For not only does she do the work of a relieving officer, but she stands to the committee in the same relation as that in which a relieving officer stands to a Board of Guardians : she is responsible to them for every penny she gives away, just as they are responsible to the whole society, and all who subscribe to its funds, for every penny all the members give away. Although the members of the Elisabeta are all ladies, the financial affairs of the society are managed by a committee of gentlemen, who revise their accounts and try to make both ends meet for them.

Besides granting temporary relief to those passing through dark days owing to illness or lack of work, the Elisabeta grants permanent allowances to a large number of old men and women whose working days are past. It gives them a supply of clothes, too, every year, and two supplies of fuel. Then it has built a beautiful old-age home for such of them as have no relatives with whom they can live and are too feeble to live alone.

The Munca, or Work Society, was founded for the purpose of relieving the poor by keeping their fingers busy. Any woman who can prove that she is

thoroughly respectable, and in need of a little help, may become one of its workers. Then the society teaches her how to work, unless she knows already ; it supplies her with any materials she may require, and sells for her what she makes. If she needs a sewing machine, it will lend to her the money to buy one ; will lend to her also, if necessary, the money to pay her rent. It provides her with medical attendance and medicine gratis, if she is ill ; it gives her fuel and clothing at Christmas ; a present at Easter ; a dot of from 40 to 1,000 francs if she gets married ; and admits her, when too old to work, into an almshouse. It interests itself in her and all her concerns, in fact, and is always on the alert to give her a helping hand.

The society has now nearly 2,000 workers on its list ; and twice every week the waiting-rooms, at its headquarters, are thronged with women and girls come either in search of work, or to bring back work done. And wonderfully pretty they look in their much-embroidered white gowns, with their bright-coloured scarfs around their heads, for they wear the national dress, being for the most part peasants, not Bucharesters. They squat themselves down on the ground in the oddest fashion, while waiting ; and they work almost as hard with their fingers as with their tongues, the very room ringing with their merry laughter. For although bare daily bread means for them twelve hours' hard toil out of every twenty-four, they seem to find life well worth living. They each in turn pass through a room where at one counter they hand in the work they

have done; at another counter they are paid full market price for doing it; and at a third, they receive the materials for the work they are going to do. Meanwhile, in an adjoining room, ladies are hard at work drawing embroidery designs for them to copy, and seeking beautiful combinations of colour. The Munca is managed entirely by ladies, who even do the buying and selling.

Furnica, or the Ant, also provides work for all comers who are respectable and poor. This society is as patriotic as it is charitable; and, while helping the needy, strives to encourage and develop national industries. The ladies who direct its operations have opened a large shop for the sale of their *protégés'* productions, and manage their affairs in the most business-like style. Thanks to them, hundreds of women who would otherwise have to live on charity are self-supporting.

Then there are societies, as the Paina Zilnica, for feeding the hungry; as the Obol, for giving clothes to those who have none; and as the Albina, for lending money secretly to gentlefolk in distress. Stray babies are taken charge of by the Materna and the Leaganul St. Catherine; while children of all ages are well cared for by many societies, especially by the Helena Domna, with its refuge, orphanage and great school. Never was there a town of its size with so many philanthropic societies as Bucharest; never was there a town where so much was done for the poor. It is a question, indeed, whether there are not too many societies, and whether too much is not done. Certainly, if a

penniless loafer were to ask me whither he could betake himself with the best chance of living in comfort, at the expense of the charitable, I should without hesitation recommend him to go to Bucharest.

In other Roumanian towns, as in all communes, the local authorities provide for the poor ; it is only in Bucharest that they stand aside and leave society to do their work for them. Beyond supporting a night refuge, a people's kitchen, some public baths, and part of an orphanage, giving pensions to a few old men and women, and subventions to a few charities, the Bucharest Municipality, even to-day, does nothing for the poor ; while the Church does even less than the Municipality, and the State does less than the Church. The whole of the poor-relief administrations of this town with its 283,000 inhabitants is, in fact, in the hands of private persons, and is paid for out of private purses. And as it is with poor relief so is it also with sick relief. There are no finer hospitals in Europe than those in Bucharest, no hospitals where the poor are treated more skilfully or more humanely ; and all who present themselves, providing they be really ill, are admitted without question. Yet neither Church, State, nor Municipality contributes one penny to the support of these institutions : they were built and are still maintained out of funds left for the purpose by dead-and-gone benefactors. The money for sick relief was provided, in fact, by private persons of their own free-will, just as even to-day the money for poor relief is provided. Of all the capitals in Europe, Bucharest is certainly the one in which charity most abounds.

OFFICIAL POOR RELIEF IN RUSSIA

A "TOPSYTURVY" SYSTEM

AT the request of the present Tsaritsa, a well-known philanthropist once spent several months in Russia, travelling round from village to village, trying to find out what arrangements were in force for the relief of the destitute. On his arrival in one village he was informed that the Communal authorities, the Mir, were holding a meeting. He joined them at once and explained his business. They seemed quite pleased to see him, and answered all his questions readily. They had twenty-three paupers to provide for, they told him; and of these some were cripples and some were children, but most were old men and women.

"How do you provide for them?" the Tsaritsa's commissioner inquired.

"Very well indeed," the authorities replied unanimously and emphatically.

"Yes, but how?"

"We have an excellent arrangement. It works admirably," they assured him, exchanging, as it seemed to him, self-congratulatory glances the while.

"Yes, but what is the arrangement?" he insisted. "Tell me exactly what you do for your poor."

"We send them out to beg in other villages," the Starosta replied, with the air of a man who is doing his fellows good service and knows it. "They are all out begging now," he added.

It was mid-winter; the whole country was covered with snow; and the nearest village was miles away.

The Tsaritsa's commissioner told me this story himself; and, although he warned me that it would be unfair to regard the village in question as quite a typical village, still he admitted that there were hundreds of Russian villages where the destitute were provided for in much the same fashion.

I was in Russia, when I met him, trying to do in towns what he had already done in villages; trying, in fact, to find out how the poor were dealt with there, not privately, by the charitable, but officially, by the authorities. I knew, of course, before I went there, that there was no Poor Law in force in the Tsar's dominions, no regular poor-relief system; still, as I knew also that a large section of the population belonged to the poverty-stricken class, I had taken it for granted that there must be a State-organised relief system of some sort, if only for the warding off of starvation. When, on my arrival in St. Petersburg, however, I applied for information concerning this system, those to whom I did apply seemed embarrassed. There was a poor-relief system, or, at any rate, there were poor-relief arrangements, I was assured, again and again; but what they were, or who made them, no one seemed to know. Even

the very man who in theory was taking care of the poor—the civil director of one of the police sections—was evidently in doubt, the first time I saw him, not only as to how they were taken care of, but also as to whether it was, or was not, he who was taking care of them. As a point of fact—he admitted it later—he had never given a thought either to them or their affairs, during the many long years he had been in office.

As it was with this official, so it was, I soon found, with all the Russian State officials. Nothing could exceed their kindly courtesy; they were manifestly not only willing, but anxious, to give me all the information I could possibly desire concerning what the State was doing for the poor; but, unfortunately, they had no information to give; there was no information, indeed, to be given, as the State was doing nothing. It was not even watching over the administration of poor relief, I discovered: excepting in Moscow, indeed, and possibly another town or two, there was no regular poor-relief administration to watch over. In this huge empire, with its 130,000,000 inhabitants, of whom nearly ninety out of every hundred belong to the handworking class, the State has never yet attempted to organise poor relief, or do anything else for the poor, excepting to punish them sometimes for being poor. Nor does it even force local authorities to do anything for them: on the contrary, more often than not it throws difficulties in the way of such of the local authorities as really try to help them. And so far as these authorities are municipalities, they, for the most part, do not try.

In St. Petersburg, for instance, the municipality practically refuses to accept any responsibility whatever with regard to the poor: beyond paying for the board and lodging of a certain number of old men and women, it does nothing for them at all; it ignores their existence, in fact.

Although there is no State-organised poor-relief system in Russia, there is, of course, a relief system of a sort, one that seems simply to have "grewed" there, and smacks strongly of the soil. The peculiarity of this system is that the burden it entails falls not on the community as a whole, not on the rich, but only on the poor—in towns both in practice and theory on the poor, and in rural districts in practice, if not in theory. It is, in fact, as if here in England workhouses were supported entirely by future workhouse inmates, and persons paying income-tax were not required to pay the poor-rate.

In St. Petersburg, as in other Russian towns, the inhabitants are divided into five classes—viz., nobles, priests, merchants, small traders, and handworkers and so far as poor relief is concerned, each class forms a separate community, and must provide for its own poor. If, therefore, a nobleman were to become destitute and apply for relief, the cost of whatever was given to him would, in theory at any rate, fall on his fellow-nobles. In the same way the cost of relief given to a priest falls on his fellow-priests; and that of relief given to a merchant, a small trader, or a handworker, falls on the merchants as a class, on the small traders as a class, or on the handworkers, as the case may

be. But neither nobles nor priests require pauper relief as a rule, nor yet merchants, nor small traders. Unless overtaken by some sudden misfortune, indeed, a merchant can never possibly require pauper relief; as, by one of the rules in force in his class, if his income falls below a certain amount, he ceases, at the end of the year, to be a merchant, and takes rank as a small trader, or even perhaps as a handworker; just as a small trader, before sinking into destitution, becomes, as a rule, a handworker. Thus practically all who require relief are handworkers; on the handworker class, therefore, falls the whole cost of the relief given, an arrangement, surely, that smacks of topsyturvydom.

The arrangement in force in St. Petersburg with regard to sick relief is even more topsyturvy than that in force with regard to poor relief. Every working man or woman in the city must pay a rouble a year to the hospital fund, and has in return the right to free treatment in case of illness. Now, this method of raising money for the support of the hospitals would have much to commend it, were it not that the very same treatment for which the working classes must pay their roubles, is given to the higher classes gratis. In St. Petersburg all classes alike have the right, in case of illness, to claim admission to hospitals; while it is the working classes alone who are forced to contribute to their support.

So far as regards poor relief, the fact of the working classes of St. Petersburg having to bear the full burden it entails is not quite such a hardship, it must

be admitted, as it seems; for the burden is a very light one. It is only persons having what we should call a settlement in the town—*i.e.*, persons inscribed in a class—who dare even ask for relief; and among the workers certainly not one in ten, probably not one in twenty, has a settlement. The overwhelming majority of them are peasants, who have left their communes for some reason or other and made their way into the city. If one of these were to apply for relief, he would promptly be sent back to his native commune, even though he might have left it sixty years before. Nay, a man born and bred in St. Petersburg may, if the son of an immigrant, be sent back to his father's commune, when his strength fails him. Every year hundreds of men and women who have spent practically their whole lives in the city, working for their daily bread, are turned out forcibly for no other reason than because they can work for it no longer. All these people must, whether they wish it or not, betake themselves each to his—or her—commune, the moment the fancy seizes the police to issue the order for them to go. They may return, it is true, if they can elude the vigilance of the police; and, as a point of fact, many of them do return, again and again. When I was in St. Petersburg there was a poor old woman who had just succeeded in smuggling herself into the city for the twentieth time. Still, the great mass of those who are sent away go, of course, to stay. Thus the cost of providing for the worn-out workers of St. Petersburg, as of most Russian towns, falls chiefly on the rural communes. And this is the most topsy-

turvy touch of the whole system ; for, poor as Russian towns are, they are still rich compared with the rural communes ; and hard as it is for the town workers to make both ends meet, it is still harder for the peasants : life for them, indeed, is more often than not one long struggle to ward off starvation.

The money that is required for poor relief in St. Petersburg is voted by the members of the class which has to provide it. This is a mere matter of form, however, as vote it they must. Should they refuse, they would forfeit at one fell swoop all their privileges as members of a class, and with them all their rights as citizens, even their right to remain in the city. It is the police who determine how much they must vote, and who, in most cases, take charge of the money when voted. Whatever is done, indeed, officially for the poor of St. Petersburg, is done by the police. The police are practically the only official caretakers of the poor, the only relieving officers ; and all that they ever do is to deal out doles from time to time to the more importunate among them, and grant the less importunate permission to beg. Granting permission to beg may be regarded, in fact, as the official solution of the pauper problem in Russian towns, the recognised method of providing for the destitute. Fortunately for the poor, begging in Russia is a lucrative calling, as all true Slavs are not only generous but superstitious ; and there is a proverb among them that luck turns its back on the man who refuses to give alms.

There is not a single official institution in St. Petersburg for the benefit of the pauper class ; and,

although there are two semi-official institutions that are professedly for their benefit, it is only professedly ; as, in reality, one of the two, the Beggars' Depôt, is maintained chiefly for the convenience of the police ; and the other, the Gorodskaja Bogodielna, as a means of helping persons who have either some little money of their own, or friends able and willing either to give them money, or bring influence to bear on their behalf.

The Beggars' Depôt is a very useful institution, police-ridden though it be ; and if there were more of its kind in the city, there would be fewer deaths from starvation. It is a sort of combined prison, workhouse, casual ward, hospital, old-age home, and orphanage : it is a general refuge for the destitute in fact, or rather for such of the destitute as the police cannot either send back to their communes, or, without risking unpleasantness, leave in the streets. Waifs and strays are taken there when found ; and so are the blind, the halt, the maimed, and the very old ; men, too, sometimes who are out of work and cannot be trusted to starve quietly, or who are of the sort the authorities deem it wise to keep under observation.

The Gorodskaja Bogodielna¹ is the chief old-age home of St. Petersburg, the retreat to which, in theory, all the destitute, who have a settlement in the city, betake themselves when their working days are over. In practice, however, as opposed to theory, the very poor—the pauper class at any rate—rarely cross its threshold ; as all who go

¹ *Vide* page 156, "In Danish and Russian Old-Age Homes."

there must either pay for themselves at the rate of 72 roubles a year, or else induce either the municipality, or some private person, to pay for them. The result of this arrangement is that many of the old people one finds there belong to the lower middle class; while many more have been gentlemen's servants, and are sent there by their former masters. Yet the home was built by Catherine the Second for the express benefit of the very poor; and it would be an ideal refuge for them if they were allowed to go there. As it is they must content themselves with the Viazemsky Dom.

The Viazemsky Dom is the great pauper resort of St. Petersburg, the refuge where the beggars, who pass their days on church steps, pass their nights, where all the flotsam and jetsam of the city, indeed, drift sooner or later. None the less, although it is under the surveillance of the police, it is not an official institution, but a private business concern, which is worked by its owner for the sole benefit of his own purse. It is a huge place: in bygone days it was the palace of a great prince; but it is now little better than a ruin, without any trace of its former splendour. There are holes in the roof, holes in the walls, holes everywhere; and the stairs are in such a rickety state that one mounts them at the risk of one's life. The dilapidation of the Dom, however, is as nothing compared with its squalor, its dirt: the man who has not seen it does not know what dirt really is. It must be centuries since the house was either swept or garnished, and the smell . . . There is not another capital in Europe where

the authorities would dare allow such a building to stand ; they would burn it down with all possible speed, if for nothing but the fear of plague and pestilence. And thousands of the poor of St. Petersburg pay five kopejki each a night for the privilege of sleeping there.

The great halls and salons of former days have been transformed into long corridors, some of which have a little room partitioned off at one end. In the corridors there is no furniture excepting a sort of table, about six feet wide, fixed against the wall the whole length of the apartment. On this—it is bare wood—the inmates sleep, men, women, and children, all huddled together, as closely packed as sardines in a box. It is a horrible sight, all these people lying there in one great mass, as it were, the drunken, the vicious, the diseased, shoulder to shoulder with decent folk, young and old, whose only crime is their poverty. Most of the inmates seemed too tired to make much noise the night when, under the guidance of police officials, I paid the Dom a visit ; still there was hardly a room in which some drunken fellow or other was not doing his best to render life a burden to his fellows. In one room where the cursing and swearing and maudlinism seemed worse even than elsewhere, a lad with a thin delicate face and eyes all aglow with enthusiasm, was vainly trying to drown the noise by reading aloud from the Gospel. In another—this was hardly bigger than a cupboard—we found three young girls lying asleep. One of the police officials had thrown open the door without ever a knock, or

a word of apology; and, in reply to a horrified remonstrance, he exclaimed with a look of unfeigned amazement, "No right to open the door? Why it is the girls who had no right to shut it!"

I have seen many wretched resorts for the poverty-stricken in my time, but never another resort so wretched, or so demoralising, as this Viazemsky Dom. I have visited many cities, too, where the poor are neglected, but never another city where they are neglected officially so wantonly and pitifully as in St. Petersburg.

In Moscow a very different state of things prevails with regard to the treatment of the poor from that which prevails in St. Petersburg. The Moscow municipality, which is both richer and more independent than any other Russian municipality, has made a clean sweep of the typical Russian relief system, with its antiquated notions concerning the responsibility of each section of the community for its own members; and it has organised a regular poor-relief system—one which, it prides itself, is founded on the English system. The town is divided into districts, and each district has its own board of guardians, honorary officials who are, however, appointed, not elected, and who cannot refuse to act. These guardians are responsible for all the outdoor paupers in the city. They are expected not only to watch over them, but to supply them, when necessary, with food and clothing, at their own expense, too, in a great measure. For, although the municipality does give them money, it does not even profess to give them a quarter of what they must spend. The rest,

it tells them, they must find for themselves—must, in fact, either give, or persuade their friends to give. Nowhere, perhaps, out of Russia would such an arrangement as this be possible ; but there it works fairly satisfactorily, so far, at least, as the poor are concerned.

Then the municipality maintains a large number of well-organised institutions for the benefit of the poor. It has a huge workhouse, where all sorts and conditions find a refuge ; and attached to it is, on the one side, a colony for the unemployed ; and, on the other, a home for old men and women whose characters are none of the best. The respectable aged poor it lodges, so far as space can be found for them, in old-age homes, where they are made extremely comfortable. As for the children, for them it has not only orphanages and homes of all kinds, but, what is much more remarkable, some very well-managed schools, over which it watches with infinite care and pride. The city has even founded holiday homes for the more delicate of its boys and girls ; and has made arrangements by which all the poor children who go to the elementary schools are taken for walks in the country from time to time. Moscow is the model city of the Empire, in fact, in all that relates to the poor. The treatment it metes out to the destitute among its inhabitants is quite surprisingly good, indeed, considering the difficulties it has to contend against. For more often than not its best-laid plans are thrown completely out of gear by the meddling of State officials, who for the most part look decidedly askance on its zeal for education, and

have but little sympathy with its philanthropic schemes. Even in Moscow there is, it must be admitted, great suffering among the poor. Still, there is certainly much less suffering there than elsewhere in Russia.

As for other Russian towns—among Russian towns I do not include those of Finland, Poland, or the German Provinces, it must be noted—they all, or almost all, so far as I could judge, model their arrangements on those of St. Petersburg rather than of Moscow, and leave their poor more or less to fend for themselves. One old gentleman, it is true, assured me that Astrakhan had an ideal poor-relief system. He had organised it himself, on Elberfeld lines, when governor there some thirty years before. Unfortunately, when I was in Russia, no trace of his work was to be found. Most of the towns seemed—at least if the affirmations of their officials were to be trusted—to be just on the point of doing something for their poor, but very few of them had begun to do anything. In one place where there were no poor-relief arrangements of any sort, I was gravely, and I believe truthfully, informed by the governor that, had he known I was going, he would certainly have had some organised ready for me to see. Some idea of the state of things that prevails may be gained from the fact that, in many districts, when a poor woman goes to prison, she must take her children with her, because there is nowhere else for them to go; and they pass their days and nights shut up there with ordinary criminals. A committee, under the presidency of the Tsaritsa, is, it is true, trying to

render this most demoralising arrangement unnecessary by organising special schools for these children ; but as recently as 1901 I found both boys and girls even in the Moscow prisons.

In rural Russia, curiously enough, poor relief is, at any rate in theory, more carefully organised than in towns, although on lines every whit as topsyturvy. In country districts the responsibility, so far as there is any responsibility, of providing for the poor rests on the local authorities, primarily on the communal authorities, the *Mir* where there is a *Mir*, or the other communal authorities where there is not. Thus it rests on the peasants themselves, for these authorities are peasants invariably. If the communal authorities, however, cannot provide for the poor, through sheer lack of money, then the duty devolves on the district authorities, the *Zemstvos* ; and if they, in their turn, cannot provide for them, and for the same reason, it devolves on the higher authorities, the Provincial *Zemstvos*. This arrangement would, no doubt, be excellent were it not that the overwhelming majority of *Mirs* and *Zemstvos* alike are practically always suffering from lack of money ; and are therefore always unable to provide for their poor. Before communal authorities can spend one penny on poor relief, or anything else local, they must pay their taxes ; and these amount, more often than not, to a good half of the full yield of all the land in the commune. It happens, indeed, sometimes, when the harvest is bad, that the tax-gatherers claim the whole year's crops ; and the peasants are left to live as best they can until the next year's crops have grown.

Even if the communal authorities had the means of forcing the Zemstvos to come to their help, and they have not, the poor would reap no great benefit; for the Zemstvos cannot give money when they have none; and they, too, are always financially in very sore straits indeed. They have the right, it is true, to levy taxes, but there is nothing much excepting land on which to levy them, in most districts; and land is so heavily taxed by the central Government that it is only when the harvest is good that they venture to lay on it any additional burden. Then, before they can spend on poor relief any of the money they do raise, not only must they defray the cost of the whole administration of the district, but they must pay the salaries of police officials and other Government functionaries without number, and must keep them well supplied with horses. They must build police-stations, recruiting-stations, and railway-stations whenever they are needed; and must see that all the caserns in the district are in good repair, well lighted, and heated. There is neither bound nor limit, indeed, to what they must do excepting the goodwill and pleasure of the central Government. By the time they have spent all the money the Government forces them to spend, they have none left for poor relief or anything else.

Sometimes, it is true, when things go very badly with them—if there is a famine in the district, for instance—the Zemstvos may obtain a grant out of the Imperial purse; but as the money granted must pass through many hands, and every hand levies its toll, there is not much of it left, as a rule, when it reaches them.

And the Provincial Zemstvos are in precisely the same position as the District Zemstvos. There is hardly a Zemstvo in Russia, indeed, that is not completely at the end of its resources; and the great majority of them have for years been overwhelmed with debts. To expect them to come to the help of the communes by contributing a single rouble towards the relief of the poor is absurd, a mere fiction, one not even—as Disraeli—founded on a fact.

When, during the Russo-Japanese War, the central Government sent round orders to the Zemstvos that they must see that the wives and children of the soldiers fighting in the Far East were properly cared for, many of these councils replied, stoutly, or deprecatively, according to their tempers, that they neither could, nor would, do anything of the kind. “We cannot feed women and children without food,” they declared, “and we have no food, nor have we the money wherewith to buy food.”

What became of these luckless women and children, who must, of course, have numbered thousands and thousands, I do not know; but the chances are they were supported, so far as they were supported at all, by the communal authorities; for practically whatever is done in rural Russia for the relief of the poor, excepting what is done by private charity, is done by these authorities—that is, by the peasants, the poor themselves, in fact. This being the case, the wonder is not that so little should be done for them, but so much, especially as what is done is done voluntarily, it must be remembered, as the State

would never dream of taking the trouble to bring compulsion to bear in the matter. There are undoubtedly villages—as the village of which the Tsaritsa's commissioner interviewed the Mir—where folk who are too old or too feeble to work are simply left to starve ; but these are the exceptions. In the majority of villages the destitute, especially the aged destitute, are treated both kindly and generously : so long as there is a crust of bread they have their full share of it, and so long as there is a log of wood they have their fire. If a good year ever does come—if the harvest is plentiful and there is money in hand—then the peasants' thoughts turn at once, as by instinct, to the building of orphanages or old-age homes. The most beautiful plans are made for the benefit of the poor ; and if these plans remain plans, as they almost invariably do, it is only because two good years rarely come together.

When the crops fail, and they often fail, then undoubtedly what we should call the permanent pauper class suffer cruelly in rural Russia, although not more cruelly, perhaps, than the rest of the community. At the best of times there is never too much to eat either for the old or the young, the feeble or the strong, in a Russian village. In evil days, therefore, the gnawing of the grim wolf soon makes itself felt. Men, women, and children go about week after week, month after month, with hunger in their eyes, unless, indeed, death in its mercy comes to put an end to their misery. For this terrible state of things the communal authorities are, as a rule, in no way to blame ; for, with the best will in the world, they cannot at

such times provide for the destitute, being themselves not infrequently within hailing distance of starvation. All that they can do for them is to send them out to beg. Sometimes, indeed, they themselves have no alternative but to join the ranks of the beggars. In districts where the soil is very poor, there are villages where the whole community turn out regularly in winter, the Starosta at their head, and tramp from place to place, with nothing to rely on for their daily bread but the charity of their fellows.

Were it not that in poor-relief matters, as in most other matters in Russia, what is left undone by the State is done, in a measure at least, by the individual, the present system must have collapsed utterly years ago. Long-suffering as the masses are in that part of the world, they would assuredly not have waited until now to rise against the classes had they had nothing but official relief to depend upon when destitute. Jacqueries in the country and labour troubles in towns would long ago have forced the Imperial Government, for its own sake, to organise something in the way of poor relief, had not the philanthropist lightened to some small extent the burden borne by the poverty-stricken. No people are so lavish in their charity as the Russians, no people give alms with the same reckless generosity. Never was I in a country where there are so many private institutions for the benefit of the poor, especially the aged poor. Then, although the State spends nothing on poor relief, and the local authorities the merest pittance, the Crown gives away huge sums in alms. Half the orphanages, charity schools, and

almshouses in the Empire, as well as all the great foundling hospitals, are supported out of funds provided by the Tsar and members of his family. Unfortunately, however, as influence counts for more than either merit or necessity in deciding who shall and who shall not be admitted, the very poor derive but little benefit from any of these institutions, excepting the foundling hospitals ; and the respectable poor no benefit at all, even from these hospitals, as the doors are barred against children born in wedlock. It is influence, too, that determines the recipients of the grants for the poor out of the Imperial purse. For these grants towns and villages apply on the most frivolous pretexts, and sometimes they receive them, but only if they have friends at Court. Anything more absurdly wasteful, or anything more demoralising and unjust, than the way in which the Imperial charities are distributed it would be difficult to conceive. Whoever clamours most receives most ; and while sturdy beggars flourish, the respectable poor wax lean. If all the money that is given away in alms by the Tsar and his subjects were spent under a properly organised, carefully administered poor-relief system, no man, woman, or child need go hungry. As it is, the number of those who die of starvation is appalling. Elsewhere in Europe the poor die this death by twos and threes, sometimes, perhaps, by tens, but in Russia by hundreds—nay, thousands. There the life of the average worker, in town and country alike, is one long fight to secure food enough wherewith to keep body and soul together. The great mass of the people do not know

what it is to have plenty to eat; year in, year out, they are always more or less hungry—of late they have been more hungry even than usual. And this is in a great measure because of the taxes they are forced to pay—taxes for which they obtain in return nothing, not even the certainty of a few kopejki as pauper relief, when too old and feeble to work. Little wonder the very air is alive with rumours of strikes and jacqueries.

The State in Russia has many sins on its conscience, for which it will have to pay heavily sooner or later; but, unless the omens be woefully at fault, the sin for which it will have to pay most heavily is its neglect of the poor. It is with good reason that Tsar Nicholas stands in much greater fear of the millions of his subjects who are clamouring for bread than of the thousands who clamour for freedom.

IN DANISH AND RUSSIAN OLD-AGE HOMES

WERE I a worn-out worker, dependent for my daily bread on the charity of my fellows, I should certainly wish to change my nationality; and to become, without a moment's delay, either a Dane, an Austrian, or—provided I could be sure of a place in an old-age home—a Russian. For of all the nations in Europe these three best understand how to deal with the old and destitute, how to secure peace and comfort in their latter days for the folk who have fallen behind in the race. In England a visit to any of the abodes where the aged poor are housed is, as a rule, more depressing than a visit to a prison: at every turn one sees a troubled, discontented face, or hears a voice that tells of hopeless misery. In Denmark, Austria, and Russia, on the contrary, the homes reserved for the old people are the brightest and cheeriest of resorts; after an hour spent there, it is the outside world that seems gloomy and careworn. The heartiest burst of laughter I ever heard in St. Petersburg, I heard in an old-age home; while in Vienna working men and women betake themselves instinctively for consolation, when things go wrong with them, to the *Versorgungshaus* garden. As for Copenhagen——

A few years ago a distinguished Englishman ex-

cited great amusement in Copenhagen by solemnly announcing, after a visit to an old-age home, that England could not possibly afford to provide for her worn-out workers as Denmark provides for hers. He had noted the many little comforts with which the inmates are surrounded; had noted how well they fare in all respects, how contentedly and happily they live; and he had therefore taken it for granted that such places must be expensive luxuries. Had he given a little more attention to the subject, however, he would have found—and the fact, let us hope, would have set him a-thinking—that although the cost of living is as high in Copenhagen as in London, the average cost per head in Danish old-age homes is considerably lower than in English workhouses. But then Denmark obtains good value for every penny she spends on her poor, whereas England—there are English workhouses where the officials cost more than the paupers.

Although I was never yet in an old-age home, whether Danish, Austrian, or Russian, where life was not well worth living, among old-age homes, as among all things else, there are better and worse; and the very best are certainly the Danish. No other country, indeed, deals at once so kindly and so wisely with her aged poor as Denmark; there is no clubbing together of the old people there, no herding of the worthy with the worthless. On the contrary, infinite trouble is taken to sift them and sort them, so that the precise treatment he—or she—merits may be secured for each one of them.

In Denmark no respectable old man or woman

need ever become a pauper; no respectable old man or woman ever crosses the threshold of a workhouse. Should a man—or a woman—who has completed his sixtieth year, find himself without the wherewithal on which to live, he applies to the local authorities not for pauper relief, but for old-age relief; and this, by the law of 1891, they are bound to grant him, providing he can prove not only that his destitution is owing to no fault of his own, but that he has led a decent life, has worked hard and been thrifty; and that, during the ten previous years, he has neither received a single penny as poor relief, nor been guilty of vagrancy, nor of begging. The old people who fulfil these conditions are placed in a class apart from ordinary paupers, in the privileged class: they are the veterans of industry, and the position they hold among their fellows is much the same as that held by invalided soldiers. Although they are housed, fed, and clothed at the expense of the nation, they are neither regarded nor treated in any way as paupers. In Denmark the word "pauper" is never applied to any one above sixty, unless it be a case of "Tekel." A considerable amount of trouble is taken, indeed, to keep the members of the privileged class free from everything that smacks of pauperism; local authorities are forbidden by law to house them under the same roof as paupers, or to allow pauper officials to interfere with them. The old men retain their votes, all their other rights as citizens too; and this in itself raises an insuperable bar between them and paupers; for paupers in Denmark have no civic rights worth mentioning—

not even the right to get married. Members of the privileged class who have relatives able and willing to take care of them, or who are strong enough to take care of themselves, are each provided with a small annuity, and the rest are lodged in old-age homes.

The mere fact that the doors of the Danish old-age homes are closed inexorably against all excepting those who have led decent honest lives, gives to the inmates of these places a certain standing in the world, which is to them an unfailing source of gratification—gratification, let it be noted, that costs not a single penny. Far from any discredit being attached to living in an old-age home, it is regarded as an honour to be there, as a proof of established respectability and general worthiness. And all that this means to the honest poor, only the poor themselves know. I once in England found a worthy old couple within hailing distance of starvation. They had been living for months as the veriest sparrows because they could not face, they said, the disgrace of going to the workhouse. In these Danish homes it is delightful to see how the inmates, especially the old women, plume themselves on being there; there is something quite touching in the dignified, self-important airs they give themselves, on the strength of being recognised members of the aged poor class. Evidently they look on mere paupers much as Prussian Junkers look on the rest of humanity—as persons between whom and themselves there lies a deep gulf. I hardly ever passed an hour among them, but some old man or woman inquired anxiously whether I was quite sure I understood that paupers were never

admitted into old-age homes. What they were given to eat, or wherewithal they were clothed, seemed to be a matter of but little account in their eyes compared with being free from association with the degraded. There is nothing these old people love quite so much as their afternoon cups of coffee; none the less, had they to choose between going without their coffee and sitting side by side, while they drank it, with those pariahs, the paupers, in every old-age home in Denmark there would speedily be one meal less a day—this is a point on which there can be no doubt.

"Yes, I am real glad and thankful to be here," an inmate of a country old-age home once informed me. "I have a better bed to lie on than I ever had in my life before, and I am just as comfortable as I can be. But," she hesitated for a moment, and then added, with an odd little flush on her honest weather-beaten face, "I don't think I could ever have made up my mind to come, had that lot been here." She pointed as she spoke to the Fattiggaard, or Poorhouse, the place where the disreputable poor, ex-loafers and drunkards, are housed in their old age. Her remark was greeted with a little murmur of sympathy by the other old women in the room, who all agreed that the home would be spoilt completely, if they must share it with all sorts and conditions.

Not only are these institutions reserved exclusively for the respectable poor, but the respectable poor are taught to look on them as their own special property. This, too, is an unfailing source of gratification to the old people, and this, too, costs not a single penny.

Whoever crosses the threshold of an old-age home, even though it be the Borgmester himself, goes there as the guest of the inmates, and must knock at the door of each room, and wait for permission before he enters. Then, when he does enter, what a flutter of delight there is ; what a bowing and curtsying and handshaking ; for they dearly love to play the host, and regard the entertaining of strangers not only as a duty, but as one of the great pleasures of life.

Among these old Danes there is no trace of that dull hopelessness, that "just waiting" which is so marked a characteristic of the London poor in their old age ; on the contrary, I always found them, when I paid them a visit, alert, eager for news, and on enjoyment bent. Feeble though they be many of them, the old men were evidently keenly interested in politics ; they have votes, it must be remembered, and are extremely proud of the fact. Their faces glow with delight as they tell how the rival parties keep them well supplied with newspapers, and send carriages to take them to the voting booth when the election day comes round. They were staunch Democrats for the most part—at ministerial doings they were never weary of cavilling—none the less they were all fervently loyal, I noticed, devoted to their King, "the very best King in the whole world," as one of them assured me, "although he does make mistakes sometimes." Nor was it only in politics they were interested ; they seemed quite in touch with all that was going on both at home and abroad, especially in England, "the country where all the money comes from" ; the country, too, as they never failed to

tell me, "where our own Princess is going to be Queen one day." At that time Queen Alexandra was Princess of Wales ; and her father, Christian IX, was King of Denmark.

Nothing is more characteristic of the lines on which these homes are worked than the fashion in which the inmates and their official caretakers mutually demean themselves. I shall not easily forget the lofty dignity with which a poor bed-ridden old dame informed me, one day, that her servant of course came at once when she rang ! And the officials attached to the homes are not only in theory, but in reality, the servants of the inmates. In one of our model London workhouses several hundred decrepit old men and women are forced to get up at six o'clock in the morning, the same time as the young and strong ; and this simply for the sake of saving the officials the trouble of making two breakfasts ! In Copenhagen short work would be made of any master or matron who ventured even to suggest such an arrangement. There the officials are never allowed to forget that it is their business in life to make their charges comfortable and happy ; that they are in the home, in fact, for no other purpose than to cook for them, tend them, nurse them when they are ill, and give them a helping hand generally, while interfering with them as little as possible.

The old people are just as free from restraint as if they were in their own cottages ; they lead their own lives and go their own way without let or hindrance. So long as they demean themselves with propriety

indeed, no one has the right to say them yea or nay, unless it be for the purpose of keeping them out of harm's way, or of taking the better care of them. And should they not demean themselves with propriety—should they spend their fourpence a week pocket-money ill-advisedly, with disastrous results; or should they in any way bring discredit on their Home, or cause real discomfort to their fellow-inmates—the authorities, after giving them due warning, decide that they are not of the sort for whom old-age homes are built, and therefore transfer them to the poorhouse.

Copenhagen has now two extremely comfortable old-age homes. They both were built and organised under the direction of Herr Jacobi, who, as chief of the Poor Department, has done more than any other man to make the world understand that all schemes for bettering the condition of the respectable poor are foredoomed, unless based on classification. "It is sheer waste of time and money," he declares—and no one can speak on the subject with more authority—"trying to make decent old folk comfortable, if you shut them up with folk who are not decent." The home that was built some seven years ago is quite a model in its way. It stands in a beautiful garden in the healthiest and prettiest part of the town; and although there is space in it for four hundred inmates, the whole house looks quite homelike. For the only large rooms are the smoking-rooms and the sitting-rooms, which are the common property of all the inmates, their private rooms being quite small, only large enough, many of them, for two persons. And while all the rooms are prettily and comfortably furnished, these little rooms

are made most cosy, as the old people are allowed, when they go there, to take with them any cherished possession they may have, providing it be small. Although the old women are housed on one side of the building and the old men on the other, they are free to pass the whole day together, if they choose, in the corridors, sitting-rooms, or the garden. Husbands and wives may, if such be their wish, live together in the married couples' quarters.

It is not only Copenhagen that has beautiful old-age homes ; every town and village throughout Denmark has now an old-age home, or part of a home ; and many of the homes are quite charming, especially those in country districts. An old-age home is sometimes the joint property of three villages ; for now that they are compelled by law to house the respectable aged poor apart from ordinary paupers, neighbouring communal authorities enter into partnership and maintain a penal workhouse in one village, a poorhouse in another, and an old-age home in a third. Should a commune prefer to have its own separate home, it generally fits up some fair-sized cottage, and installs in it its old pensioners, with a respectable working man and his wife as caretakers.

Wherever the old-age home may be, and whatever be its size, the inmates are extremely well fed. In the Copenhagen homes, indeed, the food is quite extraordinarily good, thanks perhaps in a measure to the fact that the cooking is done under the direction of the former chef of a great restaurant, who works *con amore*, and provides quite delicious little dinners, for his charges, dinners that cost less, it must be

noted, than the dinners in our London workhouse. Were he, indeed, to see the great hunches of hard beef that are sometimes placed before our toothless old men and women, he would be horrified, not only at our inhumanity, but at our extravagance. In Danish homes hot milk is served to the old people at 7 a.m. At 10 a.m. they have coffee; and at 12, dinner, which consists of three courses—soup, some savoury dish that does not need much chewing, and a pudding. At 3 p.m. they again have coffee; and at 5, tea with some light dish and sweet cakes. Each inmate receives besides a little supply of bread, butter and cheese twice a week, and this he—or she—may eat when he chooses.

In country districts it is the communal authorities who are responsible for the management of the old-age homes; and in towns, with the exception of Copenhagen, the municipal authorities. In Copenhagen they are worked by the Poor Department, which administers all public charities and charitable institutions. The cost of the homes is divided between the State and the commune, or the municipality, as the case may be, one half of it being defrayed out of the yield of the beer tax, and the other half, out of the local rates.

I have visited old-age homes in all parts of Denmark, in large towns, in small towns, and in country districts; and in every home where I have ever been I have found the inmates well content, nay thankful to be there. In the homes, too, that I know in Austria the same state of things prevails, but with them I have dealt elsewhere.¹ These old pensioners

¹ *Vide* "Poor Relief in Vienna," page 29.

evidently all consider the life they lead well worth living: they have their full meed of its joys and its sorrows; and on the whole they are happy, as happy at least as it lies in their nature to be. And that it is thus is due almost entirely to the fact—no one can go about among them and doubt it—that they are treated not only with kindness, but with sympathy: their feelings are considered, their tastes are consulted, and deference is shown even to their prejudices. Denmark, in fact, takes thought for her worn-out workers; she studies what they like and what they dislike—lets them even give free rein to their little foibles, their harmless vanities. And it is by so doing, not by lavishing on them money, that she has succeeded in rendering them the happiest old-age community in the whole world. The average cost per head in the Danish homes is only about a shilling a day; in the country it is sometimes a little less; in towns it is a little more; but excepting in Copenhagen, where it is 1s. 8d., the difference is never very great. In the most charming of all the homes, Fredensborg, the cost per head is exactly a shilling a day; while in the most comfortless of all the London workhouses it is now 2s. Thus our poor miserable old paupers actually cost us considerably more than Denmark's well-cared-for pensioners cost her. And all because we do not take thought for them, but content ourselves with lavishing on them money, money for which we obtain in return scant value.

It is interesting to note that in some of the Danish homes the cost of administration—officials' salaries, rations, etc.—amounts to only one-twentieth of the

whole cost of the home ; and that in none of them does it amount to more than one-fifth.

Between the old-age homes in Denmark and those in Russia there are fundamental differences, of course ; for, whereas in the one country these institutions are but the complement to a singularly perfect poor-relief system, in the other they practically take the place of any poor-relief system at all. Russia, it must be remembered, has no poor law, no poor rate ; as a State, indeed, she does nothing whatever for her poor. In Denmark old-age homes are public institutions ; they are there by the law's decree ; they were built out of public funds, and are supported in the same fashion. In Russia, on the contrary, they are for the most part private institutions, the property either of the Crown or of individuals ; the money wherewith they were built was a free gift ; it is by means of free gifts, too, that they are chiefly supported. In Denmark it is the law that decides who shall, and who shall not, go to these places ; and whoever goes, goes not by favour but by right, by the right of his own personal merit ; while in Russia the law has nothing whatever to do with the matter, and luck, perhaps, has almost as much, as merit. None the less, in spite of these differences, the Danish homes and the Russian have much in common, as is proved by the fact that in both happy, contented old men and women are to be found, old men and women who are most thankful to be there. In the latter the company is no doubt less " select " than in the former ; the inmates have not been so carefully sifted and sorted ; but this, so far as their own comfort is con-

cerned, is a point of little importance. For Russians are much too good-natured, too easy-going, to worry themselves, as Danes and Englishmen do, about the moral status of those around them.

St. Petersburg prides itself on its nice appreciation of social distinctions; and holds that, in deciding how even the destitute are to be provided for, respect must be paid not only to merit, but to birth. This being the case it is but natural that the most attractive of its old-age homes should be reserved exclusively for those who have seen better days, for gentlefolk in fact. This is the Widows' House, as it is called, in spite of the fact that among the six hundred old ladies whose home it is, there are more spinsters than widows. It is a beautiful place, a palace, the old Tsaritsa Elizabeth Palace, which stands just opposite the well-known Smolnyi Institute, and close to the great Cathedral. The inmates, in their faded, well-worn clothes, seem oddly out of keeping with their surroundings, as they walk up and down the great corridors where Court receptions were once held; or make their way up the splendid staircase to their gorgeous chapel; or still higher, to that quaint little portable chapel which Peter the Great used always to have carried about with him, wherever he went. Still, far from being oppressed by the grandeur of their habitation, they seem to derive from it positive pleasure; and certainly everything that could be done has been done to render the place comfortable.

One side of the Palace is set aside entirely for the widows, each one of whom has a room to herself, as pretty a room as one could wish for. One old lady

whom I visited had divided hers into three parts—a salon, a dining-room, and a bedroom—and was living there quite in state. The widows dine in their own rooms, all their food being brought to them, from the common kitchen, by servants who are there to help them with their work, and make things comfortable for them. Widows are not admitted to the home until they are sixty, whereas spinsters may go there at forty; the spinsters, however, are by no means so well off when they are there, as the widows. They have only half a room each, and they must dine in the common hall, for there are no servants to wait on them. None the less they have no reason to complain of their lot, for they are treated both kindly and respectfully, and much trouble is taken to make things pleasant for them. They have nice little dinners, too, every day—a fact that has its influence, of course, on their tempers, and thus on the general welfare. They had three courses the day I was there, and everything served was wholesome, appetising, and well cooked.

In theory the inmates of the Palace home, as of many Russian old-age homes, are supposed to contribute towards their own support. The full cost per head is 280 roubles a year (1s. 7d. a day); and every widow who is admitted is expected to pay, or to find some one to pay for her, 250 roubles a year; and every spinster, 200 roubles a year. Nearly one-half of these old ladies do actually either pay for themselves, or find friends to pay for them; and the rest are paid for by the trustees of the Tsaritsa Marie Fund, to whom the house belongs, and who make

good the deficits in its budget. This Tsaritsa Marie Fund was founded at the beginning of the last century by Nicholas the First in memory of his mother, and is administered under the personal supervision of the Tsaritsa Marie Feodorovna. It now amounts to some 100,000,000 roubles; and out of it more than 5,000 old men and women are partially, or entirely, housed, fed, and clothed.

The Old Women's House, which stands quite near the Old Ladies', or Widows' House, is a modern institution. One wing of it was built in 1862 to commemorate the coming of age of the Tsarevitch Nicholas, the eldest son of Alexander the Second; and the other wing, a few years later, to commemorate his death. Here some 400 old women find a refuge in their old age—a very pleasant refuge too. The inmates of this home, unlike their near neighbours, have not come down in the world. On the contrary, they are probably seeing better days now than they ever saw in their lives before; for they all belong to the working classes, the servant-class for the most part, and not a few of them were born serfs. Probably the long rest they are having now is the first rest many of them have ever had; little wonder, therefore, they enjoy it; and enjoy it they certainly do.

When I paid them a visit I found most of them assembled in their great vestibule, laughing and talking together in the most cheery, good-humoured fashion, evidently on the best of terms with themselves, one another, and their official caretakers. There seemed to be a quite delightful absence of rules and regula-

tions in the establishment, inmates and officials working together in a friendly give-and-take spirit to make life go smoothly. The result was as happy a little company as one would wish to see. They showed me the *menu*—it was in French—of the dinner they had had on the previous Sunday : “ Soupe pot-au-feu, jambon aux pommes de terre, crêpes avec des confitures.” They showed me, too, the *menu* of the dinner they had had that very day : “ Soupe aux choux, côtelettes, esturgeon avec du raifort et des pommes de terre.” They were just going to have tea when I left them ; and later in the evening they would have “gruau d’orge” for supper, they told me.

About one-third of the women have either a separate room, or one which they share with one other woman, while the other two-thirds sleep in small dormitories. In this house, as in the Widows’ House, the inmates must either pay for themselves, or find some one to pay for them. A hundred of them, however, are always paid for by the Tsar ; 155 are paid for out of charity funds ; and many of the others, by their former masters and mistresses. The charge for a woman who has a private room is 300 roubles a year (1s. 9d. a day) ; for one who has half a room, 1s. 7d. a day ; and for those who sleep in the dormitories, 10½d. Attached to the home there is a beautiful church and also an infirmary, where the old women are sent when the end is drawing near.

By far the largest of the St. Petersburg old-age homes, and in some respects the most interesting, is the Gorodskaja Bogodielna, or Municipal House, which Catherine the Second built at her own expense

and presented to the city, having previously forced the city to present to her the ground on which to build it. It is a huge place, much too huge for any old people to live in it comfortably, excepting Russians, who seem to have none of that horror of great buildings and large rooms, which marks the English and the Danish poor. They are evidently quite content; and, oddly enough, they look quite comfortable in this home in spite of its size. It is curious to note how much more is done in Russia for women, in the way of providing them with homes, than for men. In this Municipal House, for instance, there are 3,000 women and only 800 men. Men and women alike belong for the most part to the poor section of the community; still there are among them members of a somewhat higher class—small traders, petty functionaries, and even a school-mistress or two; for in theory at any rate the *Gorod-skaia Bogodierna* opens its doors to all classes, just as our workhouses open theirs. How little there is in common, however, between even this old-age home, which is of the lowest class, and English workhouses, may be judged from the fact that its inmates betake themselves there gladly, and regard admission as a privilege. No fewer than 300 of them pay seventy-two roubles each towards the cost of their own maintenance; while 700 more are paid for by their friends; and the rest, by the municipality. Most of those who pay for themselves are lodged in small rooms, two in each room; and the other inmates, in large rooms.

In this home, as in all the Russian old-age homes, the food is decidedly good, and the old people are all

well cared for; they are provided with comfortable chairs and soft warm beds. The only complaint I heard, indeed, when I was there, came from an old lady of German extraction, who assured me in confidence that the company was very mixed, not at all what she had been accustomed to. Her feelings had been wounded, it seems, by being called upon to share her room with a woman—a most peaceful, gentle old creature—who had no “quarterings.”

The St. Petersburg Municipality has solved the creed problem in what is, for that part of the world, a somewhat unusual fashion. In Gorodskaja Bogodielna there are three chapels, an Orthodox, a Lutheran, and a Catholic; and there are three ministers, a pope, a pastor, and a priest, all living side by side on terms of perfect equality, and in peace!

It is not in St. Petersburg, however, but in Moscow, that the best of the Russian old-age homes are to be found, the best, at least, according to our Western notions. Moscow, indeed, is the model city of the whole Empire in all that concerns the poor; and two of the homes there, the Heier and the Boew, are perfect models of what such places should be—the very sort of home one would gladly see established in every town in England. Both these institutions belong to the city; they were built and endowed by private citizens, and then handed over to the keeping of the municipality, which has undertaken not only to watch over the working of them, but to supplement when necessary their endowment funds by annual grants. They are both in the pleasantest part of the town, the healthiest, too; and they both stand in large gardens.

The Heier Home is a beautiful building, and in a style singularly appropriate to its purpose: everything about it is as simple and plain as possible, yet every room is so prettily arranged that it is a pleasure to see it. On one side of the house there are rooms for thirty-three old men; and on the other, for thirty-three old women; and between them is the common sitting-room, where the whole company pass most of their time, the men reading their papers or playing dominoes, the women sewing or knitting, and both alike talking their hardest more often than not. Although the full cost there is only 180 roubles a year per head (1s. a day) the inmates are well fed and well clothed; they are well cared for, too, and life is made as pleasant for them as possible. It is the rule of the house that every one shall do exactly what he likes, so long as he does nothing to hurt himself, or to interfere with the comfort of those around him. "What would you do if one of your old men came home from his walk drunk?" I asked the Director.

"What should we do?" he repeated, evidently surprised that there could be any doubt on the point. "Why, we should put him to bed, of course, poor old fellow."

Such accidents do happen sometimes, the Director confessed, but very rarely; for it is only the thoroughly respectable who are admitted to the Heier. And certainly a more respectable-looking little community I never saw, although the majority of them belong to the poorest class—only one woman out of the thirty-three could read. Some of the men, however, were quite surprisingly intelligent and

fairly well informed. Several of them volunteered the information that they had been serfs; while one assured me "those were good days." He had had a kind master, he said. One room in the home is reserved exclusively for popes who have been forced to resign their livings through old age, or lack of strength. There were five of them there, and very happy they were, at least so one of them told me—an old man with a long white beard, and eyes that made one think of Tolstoi.

In the Heier Home I found what I had never found before in an old-age home, a mother and son sitting side by side, both inmates. The mother was eighty, the son sixty-three; but the one did not look a day older or younger than the other. They had spent all their lives working for each other; and when the time came that they could work no longer, they had applied for admission and had both been taken in on the same day. And delighted they were to be there; the old woman's face was simply beaming. All the inmates, indeed, seemed to be keenly alive to the fact that the Fates, in sending them there, had dealt with them most kindly.

The Boew Institution is much larger than the Heier, and on that account less homelike; but in all other respects it is just as comfortable, and as well organised and managed. It has 300 inmates, 180 old women and 120 old men, who are maintained at a cost of 120 roubles a year each—9½d. a day. They live in pleasant, prettily furnished rooms, six in some rooms, twelve in others; and they have good dinners to eat every day and good clothes to wear. These

people, too, belong to the respectable class, and are therefore left to go their own way as much as possible. For the aged poor who are not respectable, who cannot be trusted to go their own way, Moscow reserves a special old-age home, one which is attached to the Beggars' Dépôt, an institution that corresponds roughly to our casual ward. The inmates of this home neither receive much consideration nor are yet allowed much liberty; still, unless their faces belie them most cruelly, they are treated every whit as well as they deserve.

Of the old-age homes in country districts in Russia, I know nothing, nothing at least beyond the fact that they are few and far between—the veriest white ravens, indeed, in some provinces. It is only the town homes that I have visited, and they certainly are in many respects admirable. They are not perfect of course—in some of them there are glaring defects—none the less they all serve their purpose; for the old and destitute, the weary and worn, find in them a peaceful, comfortable refuge. In the worst among them life smacks of paradise compared with life in one at any rate of our London workhouses. Yet there is not a single old-age home in Russia where the cost per head is so high as in that very workhouse. Thus not only Denmark, but Russia, turns to better account the money she spends on her aged poor than England. Even in Moscow respectable old men and women not only fare much better than they fare in London, but they cost their fellows much less.

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